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February 2005

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From Jazz Journeyman
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Ryan Dusick

Playback With
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Jerry Gaskill
King's X Man Takes Solo Turn

Kenny Buttrey
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Velvet Revolver's
MATT SORUM
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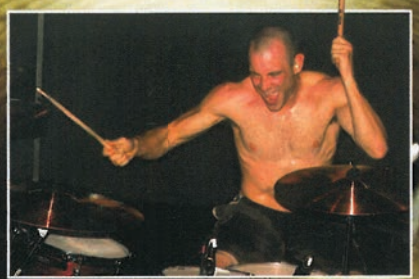

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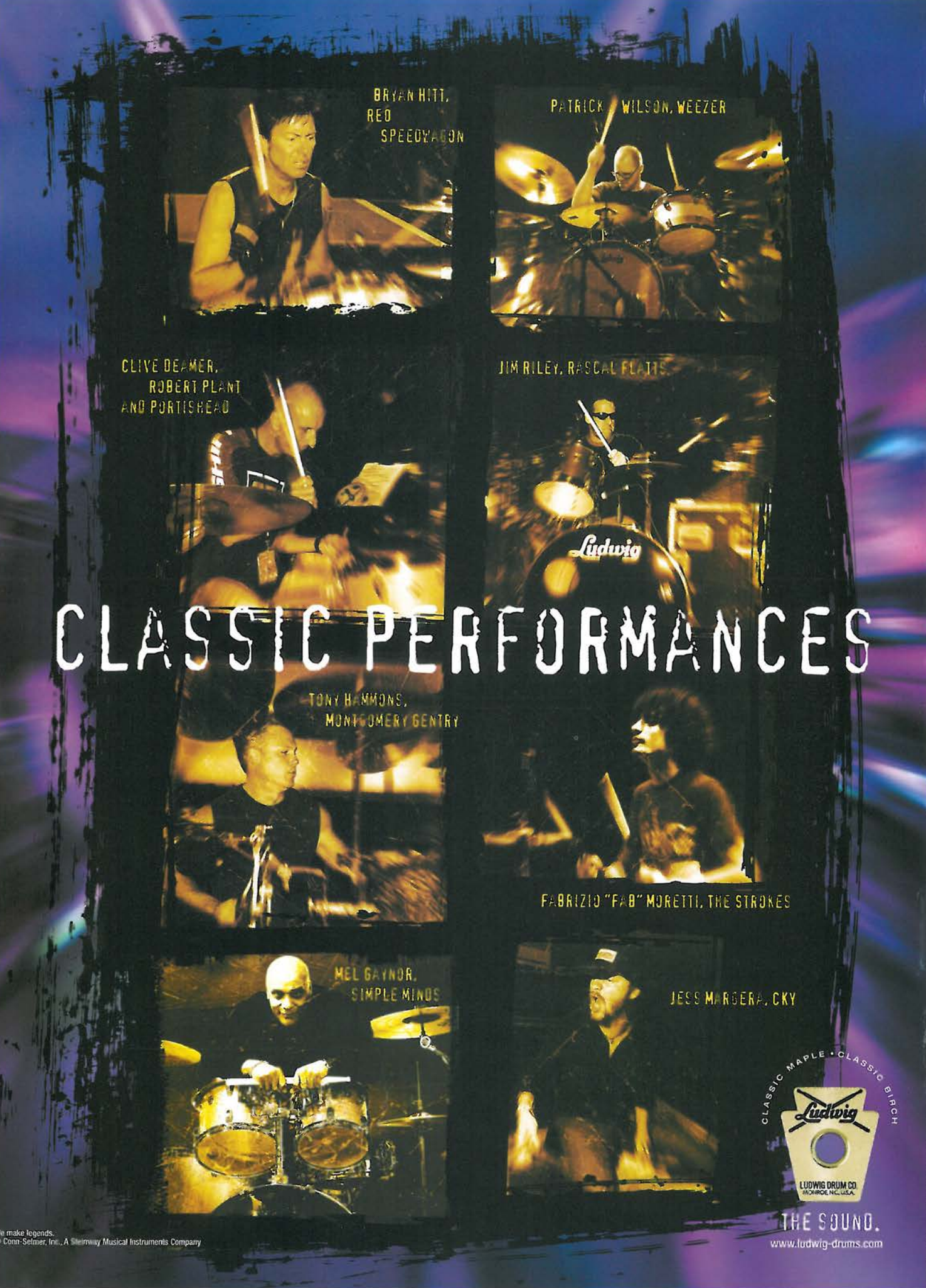
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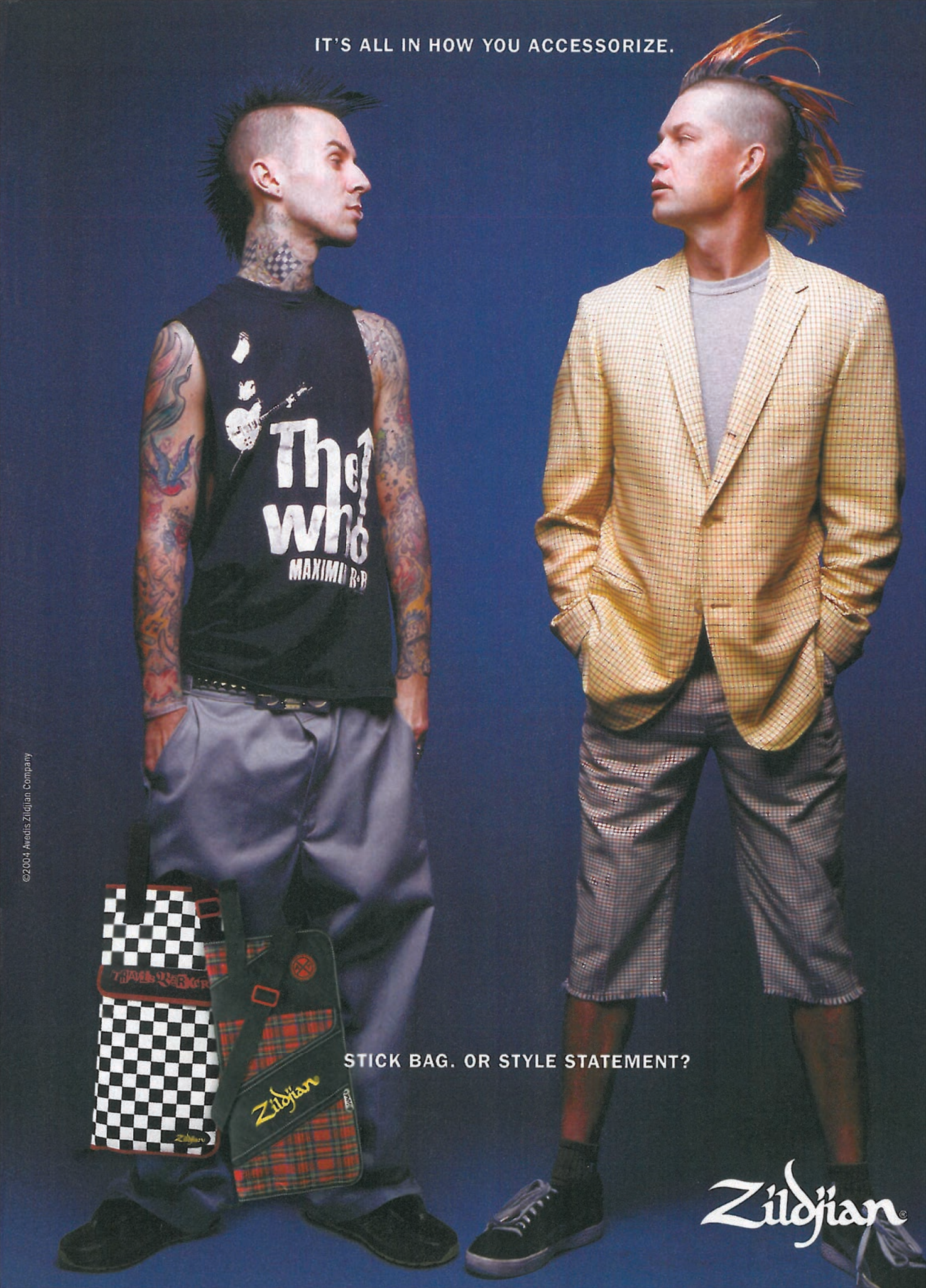
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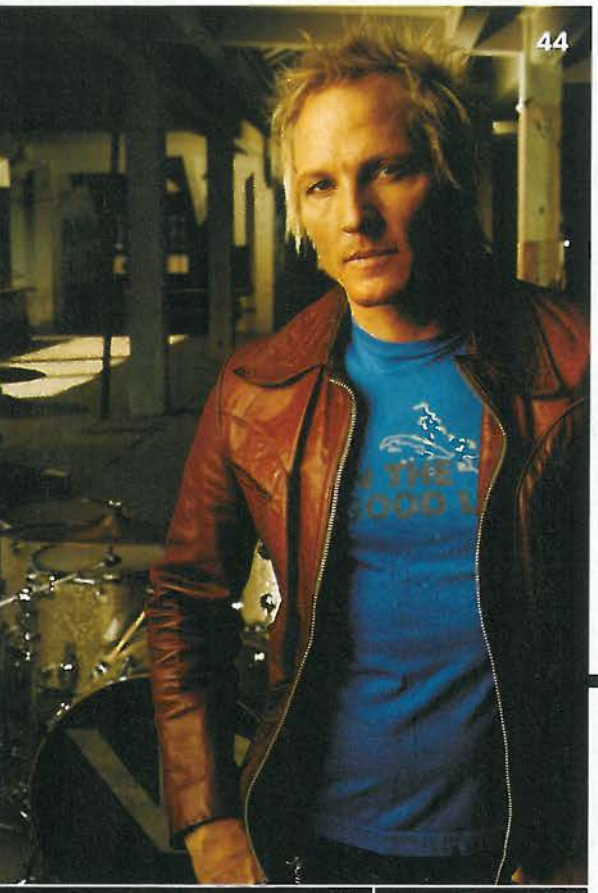

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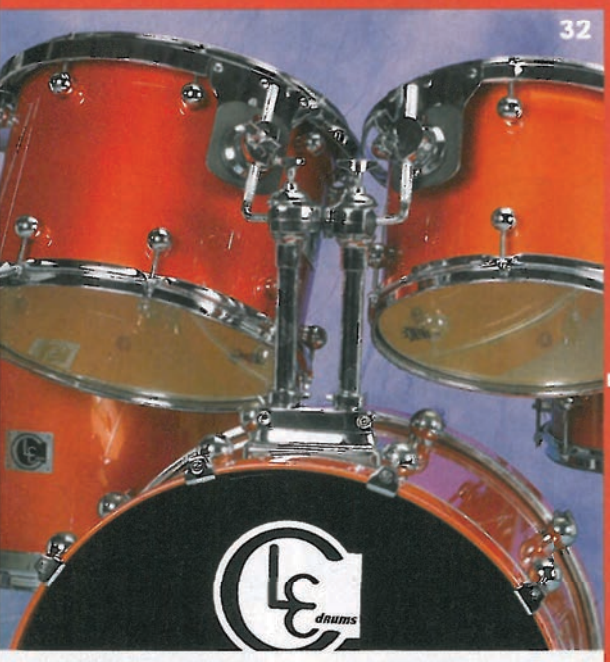

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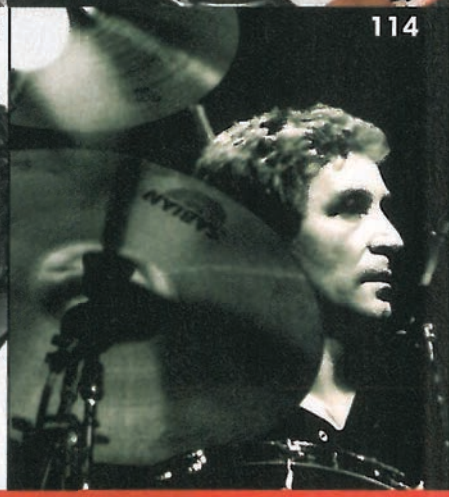

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Who Are You?

Drummers are like everybody else; we're attracted to strong personalities. Larger-than-life characters like Buddy Rich, Keith Moon, or this month's cover star, Matt Sorum, possess a magnetism that draws us in. Reading about their lives and examining their playing becomes more than just an academic exercise. We become part of a great adventure story.

Many of the most important contributors to our art, however, aren't marquee names. They'll never have a movie made about them, or a T-shirt with their likeness on it. Yet, without their accomplishments, drumming as we know it would be significantly different.

One of the cool things about being a drumming geek is that we constantly discover drummers like this, long after we've learned all the household names. Sometimes these players have been with us the whole time, playing on records we've heard a thousand times, or touring with stars who absorb all the limelight. The late Kenny Buttrey, who we memorialize this month, was such a drummer.

Buttrey was the epitome of the strong, sensitive supporter. From Elvis Presley, to Bob Dylan, to Johnny Cash, musicians simply loved playing with him—which, of course, is the highest compliment any drummer could get. We'd all do well to remind ourselves of that every time we sit behind the drums. Heck, we should repeat it as a mantra every morning: "Make them feel good...make them feel good...."

When I heard that Kenny passed away, I was surprised by the depth of my remorse. After all, I never met the man, or even saw him play. What I did do, through years of listening to records and the radio, was absorb his playing into my soul. As I write this, Neil Young's "Heart Of Gold" is playing on the stereo. That incredible feel. That deceptive simplicity. That *beautiful* sound. I've heard that song countless times, and it slays me to this day. I suspect it does the same thing to a lot of other people (musicians or otherwise).

Of course, Kenny represents many drummers who've quietly made vital contributions to drumming. If you want to start counting them, you can begin with every local drum teacher who inspired us to continue on our drumming path. From there, you'll have to do a little homework, ask a lot of questions, and read some liner notes. It might not be the stuff of adventure stories, but it definitely represents some of the greatest stories ever told.

Adam Budofsky

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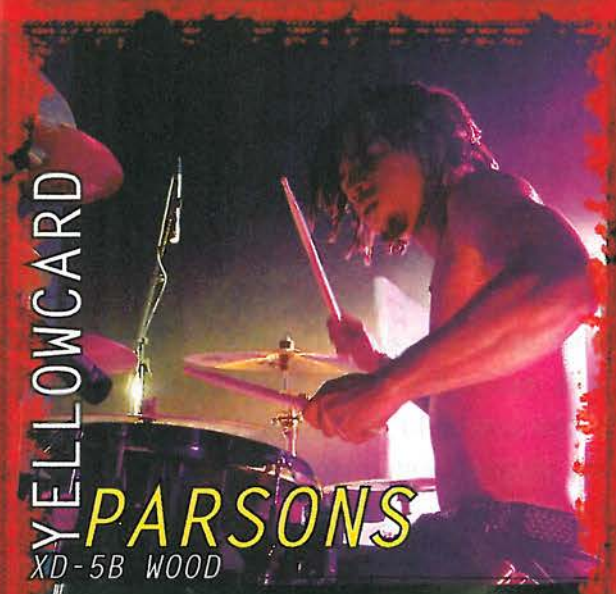

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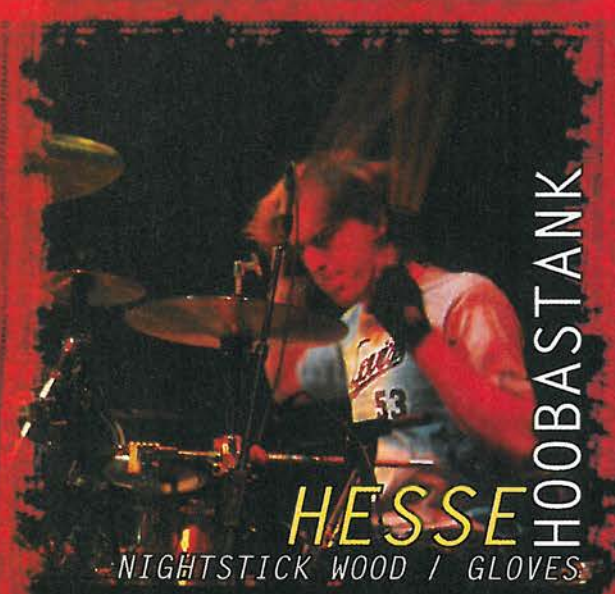

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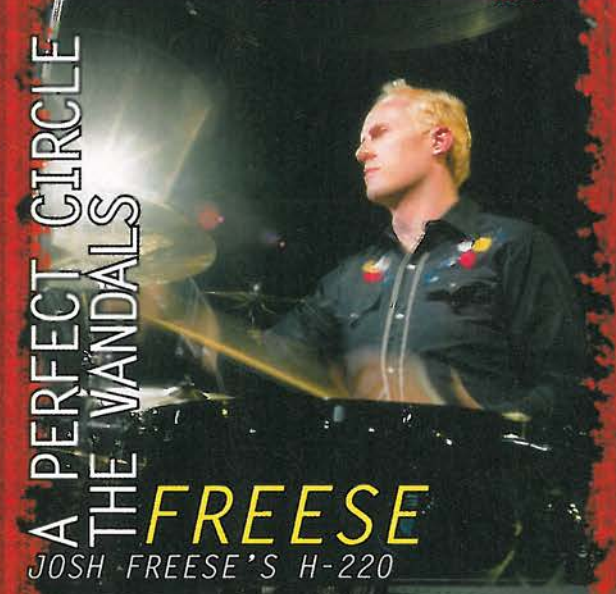

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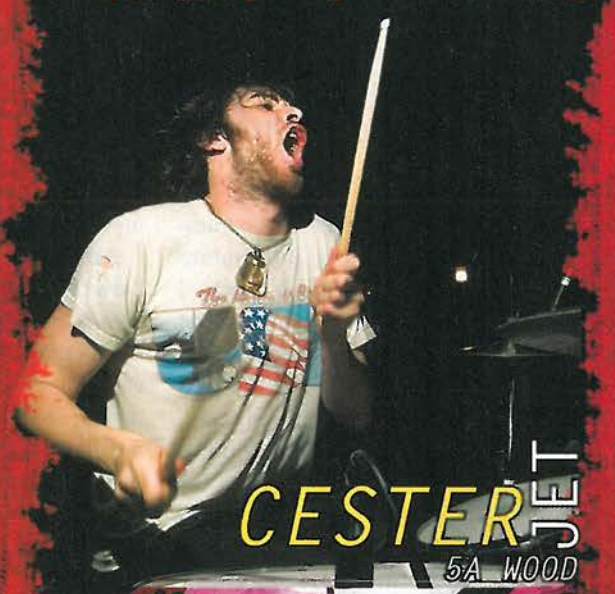

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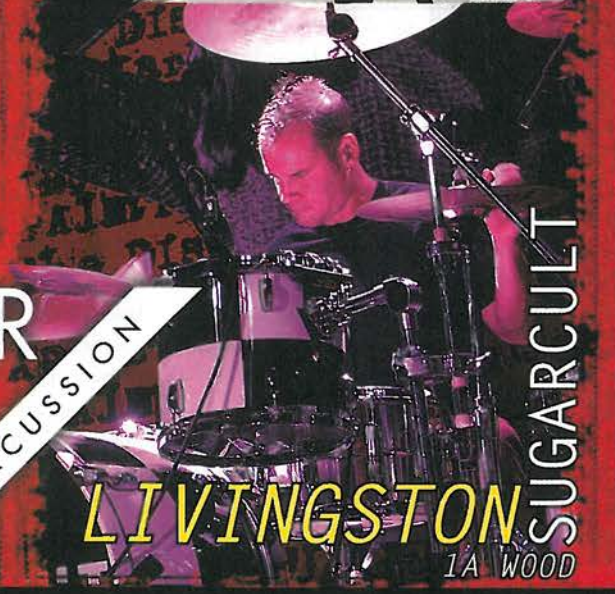

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Thomas Lang

Thomas Lang is an interesting dichotomy. On the one hand, he's a monster who has raised the bar to unheard-of heights when it comes to hand and foot technique. On the other, he's a working studio drummer who recognizes the importance of laying down a groove and supporting an artist.

I particularly liked the quote that you enlarged on page 55 of your November interview with Thomas: "Technique has *nothing* to do with music. It's a tool, like a hammer: You can build a shed or you can build the Sistine Chapel." I've been trying to get my chops-oriented students to understand that concept for the past several years. Now I'm just going to hand them the November issue and say: "Read this!"

Thanks to Thomas for the insightful commentary, and thanks to *MD* for presenting it. **Frank Overton**

Bill Bruford Playback

I can't remember the last time that a drummer "told it like it is" the way Bill Bruford did in your November *Playback* article. I *loved* the way Bill emphatically stated that all artists *do* make bad records and *do* get mad. I also enjoyed his unabashed slamming of Yes's 1991 musical travesty, *Union*. To be honest, I've never heard Bill's other choice for a "stinker," Absolute Elsewhere's *In Search Of Ancient Gods*. I'm tempted to search for it to hear what Bill described as "just a horrendous session."

It would be refreshing if more drummers were as candid and forthcoming as Bill Bruford when they speak to *Modern Drummer*. We live in a real world, after all, so real-world advice and commentary would be the most meaningful. **Allen Absecon**

Billy Ward's Tuning Advice

I recently bought a new Mapex Pro M kit that features 8" and 10" toms. I had never owned a tom smaller than 12" before. When it came to snare-drum tuning, I always cranked my snare batter tight. But when I listened to someone else playing my new kit while I stood back, I thought my snare sounded terrible.

After reading Billy Ward's "Take The Low Road" advice on tuning snare drums in your November issue, I gave his method a try. I tuned the snare to the same pitch as that of the 10" tom—which, ironically, was the pitch it was at when Mapex sent it to me. I only had to tweak the snare-side head a bit to control the sympathetic buzz. Now the kit sounds great! I've been playing thirty-eight years, by the way, so this is definitely a "teach an old dog a new trick" thing. Kudos to Billy for some great information. **Jim Gilliland**

Gretsch Spotlight

In your November *Spotlight* on the Gretsch Drum Company, Fred Gretsch states that they make drums the old-fashioned way, using old methods and machinery. That's fine for the drums, but Fred needs to get his customer-support people into the 21st century by insisting that they respond to customer email inquiries. I emailed them a question about their drumset lines and never received a response.

One of the easiest and most cost-effective ways to reach (and maybe win) customers is to respond to their questions. At the very least, a manufacturer should acknowledge that they received the customer's inquiry and will respond with an answer as soon as possible. With competition being so intense today, this "Marketing 101" concept is a no-brainer. **David Conrad**

Thanks For The News Mention

Eight simple words in your November issue *News* section—"Mike Zerbe is on tour with Air Supply"—was an awesome sight to see in a publication that I've been waiting at the mailbox for, enjoying, and referencing for so many years. Thank you! **Mike Zerbe**

MD's Coverage Of Female Drummers

I'm thirty-eight, and it's been thirty-one years since my first drum lesson. I've also been an *MD* subscriber for many years, and I *love* the magazine. If everything goes right, my niece will be a future subscriber.

I want to compliment you folks on the way you cover female drummers. I recently read the Caroline Corr online interview, and I thought it was very informative. Caroline is not the most technically advanced drummer, but a story on her is still great exposure for the female drumming population. I also appreciate the way that you remember the passing of Karen Carpenter every year (February 4). Keep up the great work! **Heather**

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Kudos To Roy

I am a professional drummer, and I'm still playing my original five-piece 1965 Rogers kit. I recently had the chance to check out Aquarian's Vintage line of heads. I changed all the heads on my kit—batters and resonants alike. The sound was great, as if they were the original heads from '65, only better.

However, I play brushes on most tunes, and I noticed that the coating on the snare head started wearing thin after only a half-dozen jobs. I called Aquarian directly and asked for customer service. I was shocked when the person who picked up the phone said that his name was company owner Roy Burns.

We talked for some time, and Roy explained that once in a great while someone touches a head when it is being produced. The oil in their hands keeps the coating from properly adhering to the head. He apologized and stated that he would send a replacement head immediately, along with a videotape on proper tuning. (The tape was great, and so was Roy's solo on it.)

In this busy world one rarely expects to speak to a knowledgeable person who can help with your problem on the first try. But when the owner of the company is there to help, that speaks volumes. Aquarian heads hold their tuning, and they wear remarkably well. And you couldn't ask for better customer service from a manufacturer.

Thank you, Roy. **Stephen M. Taylor**

Dropped Beats

The photo of Local H's Brian St. Clair that appeared on page 22 of our November issue was inadvertently uncredited. It was taken by Jeff Kroll.

The Web address in the December Critique of the Carlos Cuevas album *Depiction*, found under the title "A Trio Of Indie-Jazz Trios," was incorrect. The correct Web address is www.carloscuevas.net.

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Calfskin Drumhead History

The attached pictures are of a drumhead box that someone gave me as a gift. The head that the box once contained is missing. I'm thinking of framing the box for my office—just because I think it's cool. Do you have any information about its age or the history of the head it held? **Eric Henderson**

According to our drum historian, Harry Cangany, "American Rawhide (Amrawco), White Eagle Rawhide, and Superior Rawhide were important suppliers of drumheads to the drum industry in the first half of the 20th century. They were all based in Chicago, due to the proximity of that city's huge stockyards as a source for hides. A great deal of their business came from Midwest-based drum companies like Ludwig, WFL, Leedy, Camco, George Way, and Slingerland. Ludwig and Slingerland made their own calf heads for a while, but eventually stopped.

"Notice on your box that in addition to their calf heads, Amrawco was offering plastic heads called Weather King—the Remo brand name. This pegs your box as being from the very late 1950s or early 1960s, when drummers were beginning to make the transition from calf to plastic heads. Remo sold plastic heads to Amrawco to help them stay in business. But by selling those heads, in a way Amrawco was contributing to its own demise. Plastic heads simply took over the market, and the calf drumhead business died. Bill Ludwig II once told me how the former president of Amrawco cried to him about what happened.

"And yet, if you ever hear a drumset fitted with calfskin heads, you may be amazed at how good it sounds. It's no accident that several of the major manufacturers of plastic heads offer models specifically designed to sound like calfskin. And for the purists out there, genuine skin heads are available today from Earthtone Drumheads (www.earthtoneheads.com) and Stern Tanning Company (sterntanning@powercom.net)."

Retrofitting An Older Kit

I play a thin-shelled 1973 Ludwig kit. Would retrofitting these drums with "modern" features such as nylon tension-rod washers and insulating gaskets between the lugs and the shells improve the sound or degrade it? Also, the bearing edges of the shells don't seem to be cut as sharply (nor perhaps as uniformly) as the edges on newer drums. Should I consider having the edges refinished, and if so, by whom? **Hugh Huntley**

Installing modern features like nylon tension-rod washers and insulating gaskets will likely help with the efficiency of tuning, and might perhaps give the drums slightly more resonance. The sound should not be degraded in any way. And if you're not happy with the result, it would be no problem to remove the "upgrade items" and return the drums to their original condition.

Re-cutting the bearing edges, however, is another story. Drums from the 1960s and '70s tended to have rounder edges than today's drums do. That's one of the reasons they have a warmer "vintage" sound. If you *want* a brighter, more contemporary sound with increased attack, then having the edges cut to a sharper, more modern angle would likely help. If you're happy with the overall tonality of your drums as they are, then you should probably not have the edges re-cut.

If you choose to have the edges redone, you should seek the services of an experienced drum restorer. Several shops and services that advertise in the *Showcase* section of *Modern Drummer* do that sort of work.

Japanese Power V Kits

I have a Yamaha Power V Special with a 22" bass drum and 12", 13", and 16" toms. I've seen several Power V sets that were made in England, with hardware specially designed for those models. But labels on my set indicate that it was made in Japan. Additionally, the tom holder is the same as the one on my Yamaha Maple Custom kit (except for the YESS mounting system).

Can you tell me the story of Power V sets made in Japan? I'm especially interested in the time period in which they were made, and the wood composition of the shells. **Jorge Stark**

We enlisted the aid of Yamaha product manager Jim Haler, who in turn consulted with warranty manager Dave Ksycki. This puts your question in good hands, since Jim refers to Dave as "an encyclopedia of all things Yamaha."

According to these two gentlemen, Power V kits were made in Japan from 1992 to 1995, after Yamaha sold the Premier factory in England back to the Premier company. That's why your kit has the Yamaha bass drum mount instead of the larger-diameter mount that the English-made version featured.

The 9-ply bass drum and 8-ply tom-tom shells were made of Philippine mahogany and basswood. They were constructed using Yamaha's Air-Seal system, with staggered diagonal seams for strength and roundness.

QUESTIONS FOR MD'S DRUM EXPERTS?

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Simon Phillips On Musical Composition

Q I really love your compositions. They're harmonically technical, yet melodic; rhythmically intricate, yet grooving. How did you start composing, and how much piano and music theory have you studied? Do you compose the same way each time, or in different ways? This information would be inspirational to many of us drummer/composers.

Lance Corporal Peter Dent
New Zealand Army Band

A Thanks for your kind words. Unfortunately, I never studied music properly. I went to a drum teacher to learn to read drum music when I was eight years old, and that was it. I did take a few piano lessons, under duress, when I was about six years old. But having been brought up listening to jazz only, playing C major scales was not doing it for me. Even at that age my ear was atuned to more complex harmony, and I knew that the suspended 4 chord rocked! So I stopped with those lessons and concentrated on the drums.

As a result, when I compose it takes a long time. I have to work everything out by ear, and frankly it's a real drag. If I had the time I'd attend composition and harmony classes today, since a knowledge of chords and scales would speed up the writing process. Fortunately, my lack of training doesn't stop the creative flow. It just makes it more laborious than it should be.

I use an electronic keyboard for my ideas, choosing a guitar sound, a horn, or whatever else appeals to me for the melody. Songs may start with a bass riff, or a chord progression, or a melody, and occasionally even a drum groove—although I've found that difficult. I have the most success with a melodic or chordal approach.

I play around with chord shapes (on the piano), sometimes leaving the roots of the chord until later so I'm not tied down. I do a lot of transposing, and I'm always aware of which instruments are playing the melody, making sure that the key is good to play in. What may work well on a piano may be a nightmare on guitar—unless you're Allan Holdsworth.

I am looking forward to writing some more for a new CD next year.

Studio Great Jim Keltner's Memphis Groove

Q Thanks for all the great music over the years. While I love your drumming on countless tracks, one stands out—and baffles me. Could you please explain your main groove on "Memphis In The Meantime," from John Hiatt's *Bring The Family* album? It sounds like it's based on Chuck Berry's "Memphis," but for some reason I just can't figure it out. Thanks!

Rod Joos

A Thanks for the love. Let me explain this groove by first saying that it's just a variation of the old "Tequila" beat without the cymbal bell. Secondly, when that album was recorded back in 1987, I was using a Roland Octapad (sometimes mounted over the bass drum) to trigger sounds from a Dynacord sound module. I dedicated two pads for conga samples, one pad for a desk bell, and the rest for toms that I tuned to sound as odd as I could. In order to play the pads with my right hand and the snare with my left, I played the hi-hat just with my foot most of the time.

Apart from all that, the actual musical groove is coming from the guitar. So I say to you, if you want to play a groove like that, make sure you're playing with people who've absorbed a great deal of Chuck Berry. That'll work for you no matter what kind of music you play.

Repeat Bar

A Classic Quote From MD's Past

"I spent years working on my rudiments and doing the drum corps thing. I always appreciated guys like Billy Cobham and Buddy Rich because no matter how fast they played, you could always hear every note. That's the kind of articulation that rudiments and corps work can bring to your playing."

Tool's **Danny Carey**, February 1997

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Dave Weckl
Return To Elektric

Alex Solca

It was 1986 when The Chick Corea Elektric Band energized the jazz-fusion scene. This group of mostly irrepressible young players inspired a new generation of instrumental electric jazz fans. Now, almost twenty years later, Corea has reunited the same group of now veteran players for a new recording and tour. Before reaching his current legendary status, Dave Weckl entered The Elektric Band after much acclaim for his drum work with guitarist Bill Connors and Latin jazz pianist Michel Camilo. Weckl's solo career has since flourished, but he is enjoying his reunion with Corea and former bandmates as they tour in support of the new release, *To The Stars* (Stretch).

"I was very into revisiting the Elektric Band myself," Weckl says, "as we always had fun playing together. I was also curious to see how we all would approach the older music. And quite frankly, I was also ready for a rest from being a leader, which is very hard work. It's very cool being back, with everyone some ten years older, more mature, and with many life experiences. Playing with them again is like sitting in an old rocking chair, but at the same time it's fresh and on a different level."

What was Weckl's approach to the new music—as well as the old material? "I didn't have an interest in trying to recreate the electronics for the old music," the drummer admits. "And for Chick's new compositions, there really wasn't a need. I recently watched some old footage of the group, and I felt the electronics got in the way of playing the music, as so much attention was put on it. So this time I wanted to approach it from a purely acoustic standpoint drum-wise, but with the added percussion array on my kit that I've used for the last few years."

How has Weckl's drumming style changed since the early years with The Elektric Band? "I've gone through *many* changes since those days—in my drum study/approach, musically, and personally. All those experiences make one a totally different person and player, in my opinion."

Does Dave approach the music of The Elektric Band differently from that of his own band? "Well, sure. As with anything, when you're in control you do what is comfortable to you. My writing has had a tendency to be more 'feel good' than complex, because that's where my head has been lately. When you play someone else's compositions and are working for someone else, you sometimes have to reach for something or create something that's not necessarily the first thing you would go for. Plus it's a fine line to have enough of yourself in there while still making everyone else happy, especially the leader."

What's the future of The Elektric Band? "We all have our own groups," Dave asserts, "and Chick has many other groups as well. So the idea is to do this occasionally, not a heavy full-time schedule—none of us want that. That way we can keep our own projects going and come back to this every so often, and have fun."

Does Weckl still find Corea's music challenging? "Chick's music is *always* challenging, no matter what era you want to talk about."

Mike Haid

Alter Bridge's
Scott Phillips
Leaving Creed Behind

There have been lots of changes for Scott Phillips since *MD* featured him on the cover of the March '02 issue. Right around that time, Creed's *Weathered* came out, and the band did a long tour to support it. The group then took a year off, and in July of 2003 Phillips' daughter was born, which he describes as "a huge life change—amazing."

When Creed got back together in the fall of that year to work on their fourth album, Scott admits, "It wasn't there. It felt contrived. That passion we all once had seemed to have fallen by the wayside. It was time to make a change. Mark [Tremonti, guitarist] and I felt that we wanted to go one way, and Scott [Stapp, vocalist] wanted to go another."

Tremonti and Phillips decided almost immediately to begin a new project, and with the addition of original Creed bassist Brian Marshall and singer Myles Kennedy, Alter Bridge was born. "We wanted to get back to heavier music," Phillips explains. "It seemed like in the latter days of Creed, the focus shifted to radio songs and not on what we felt close to, which was hard rock. So the focus on our new project is on having fun and playing songs we want to play."

After not playing for about a year, Phillips had to work on his stamina and chops. Even so, he is proud of *One Day Remains*, which was released this past August. "There is a lot of cool stuff on it," Scott says, "and a variety of tempos. Creed got locked into that mid-tempo, not quite ballad, not quite rock song. This has a lot of variety."

Some of Scott's favorite tracks include "Open Your Eyes," which he says has elements of a radio song, but with good playing. He also likes "The End Is Here," which has a "Middle Eastern dark side to it," as he calls it. "There's a lot of triplet kick drum patterns and a big breakdown section right in the middle that features a cool pattern. It's real busy."

Phillips also points to "Metalingus," a tune that he says is definitely one of the heaviest they've ever done. "It has a lot of toms and aggressive playing from everybody," the drummer says. "There are big fills and a lot of double bass, which is something I hardly did with Creed."

Robyn Flans

Alice Cooper's
Tommy Clufetos
School's Out For Young Rocker

Tommy Clufetos started playing drums at age six, and by his eleventh birthday he was gigging nonstop. "I started playing in my dad's band," Tommy says. "We'd back old-time rock 'n' roll acts like Chuck Berry or Jerry Lee Lewis. All I've ever wanted to do is play drums, and I've done every kind of gig under the sun, from Bar Mitzvahs to the opening of a hot dog stand. I've loved it all."

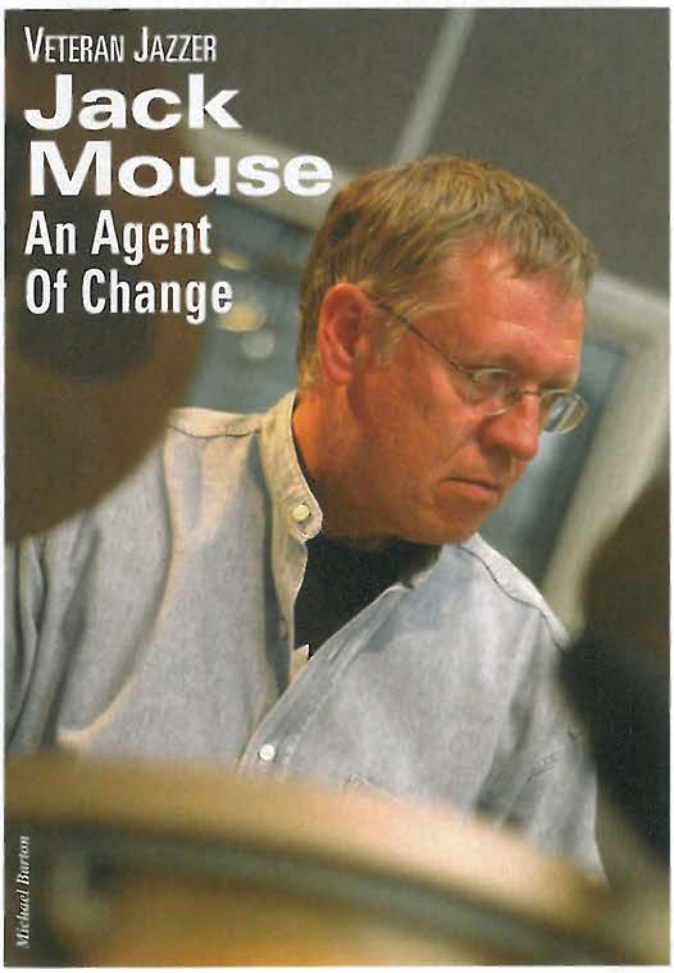
Tommy's major break came in 2001, when he landed the gig with Ted Nugent. "I was twenty-one then and went on to work with Ted for three years," the drummer explains. "He taught me so much about feel. For Ted's brand of rock, he wants everything really pushed and on top. It's not about the chops, but about the feel and groove." Tommy plays on Nugent's 2002 album, *Craveman,* and appears on the live DVD *Full Bluntal Nugity.*

In 2003, Nugent headlined a tour with Alice Cooper. When longtime Cooper drummer Eric Singer left to tour with KISS in 2004, Tommy stepped into the gig. "I saw Alice when I was fifteen and thought, One day I'm going to be in that band. And here I am!"

Clufetos admits noticing a difference in feel between playing songs from the original Alice Cooper group, which featured drummer Neal Smith, and songs from Cooper's solo career, recorded by a variety of drummers. "There are definitely more intricate drum parts in the original Alice Cooper material, and you really have to understand that that was a *band*," he explains. "I try to recreate that feeling when playing those songs and replicate the parts as authentically as possible, adding our own energy on stage.

"I'm so happy to be in this band," Tommy continues, "because these guys care so much about the music, and there's no drama. Besides playing the great tunes I grew up loving and this being a dream come true, what else could I ask for? Everybody says, 'I want to go home,' but I'm like, 'What do you mean? This *is* home.'"

For information about Tommy's clinics and appearances, visit his Web site, www.tommyclufetos.com. **Gail Worley**



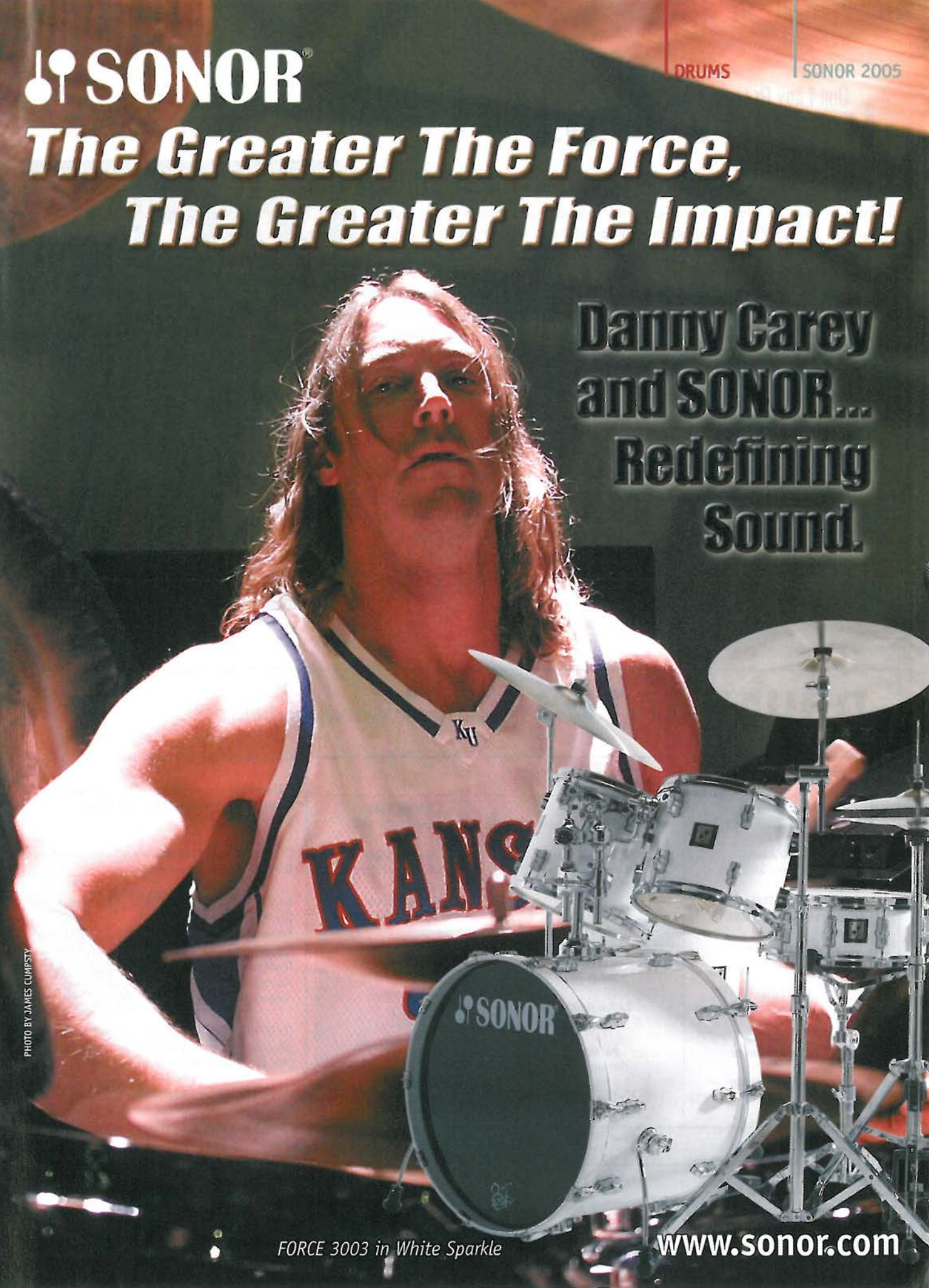
On singer Janice Borla's recent album, *Agents Of Change*, drummer Jack Mouse isn't relegated to keeping time. He also enjoys a lot of freedom to color the songs. "That is a luxury," Mouse says. "Of course, I had a lot of input because Janice is my wife. And I was very comfortable working with the other musicians on the album. Pianist Dan Haerle, bassist Bob Bowman, and I have been playing together off and on since 1975, so there's a lot of trust there."

One of the notable cuts on the album is the Abbey Lincoln tune "Throw It Away," which features just drums and vocals on the first chorus. "Drums and vocals were the first two instruments, so there is a hookup that goes way back in history," Jack says. "That little stick-and-rim thing I do developed in the studio. We had been performing it live with me playing the drums with my hands, but when we did a couple of takes, it didn't sound as good as I thought it would. So I came up with this other idea, which was inspired by the little drum march on 'Concierto de Aranjuez' on Miles Davis's *Sketches Of Spain* album."

Jack also gets the spotlight at the beginning of Joe Lovano's tune "Blackwell's Message." "I've always been enamored of Ed Blackwell's playing," Jack says. "Every time we do that tune, we do it differently. The only time I ever played the intro like that was on the album, but I am very pleased with the way it came out."

The Chicago-based drummer's résumé includes work with Stan Kenton, Clark Terry, Herb Ellis, Joe Williams, Randy Brecker, Dianne Reeves, Bob Mintzer, and numerous others. To accommodate a variety of artists and styles, Mouse prides himself on being able to get different sounds for different tunes. "That came about when I moved to Chicago," he explains. "Chicago is a great jazz town, but the busiest guys are the ones who can play anything with anybody, anytime, anyplace.

"When I first moved to Chicago, the big showrooms were still open. I'd play with singers who might start out with a big band number, and the next tune might be funk. So by loosening a couple of lugs, I could get that 'wet' rock sound. People used to love the fact that I could do that, but it's no big deal. You can do a lot with a drumkey. My inspiration for that was Shelly Manne, who could get more sounds out of a four-piece drumkit than anybody." **Rick Mattingly**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Our Lady Peace's Jeremy Taggart Under The Influence Of Elvin

"I grew up listening to Keith Moon and John Bonham as well as old-school guys like Buddy Rich and Gene Krupa," says Jeremy Taggart, drummer for Canadian rockers Our Lady Peace. "But once I started getting into Elvin Jones—and had the chance to hang out and talk with Elvin about music—I started to understand that there's not a big difference between jazz, rock, or whatever, as long as you listen to the pulse, because *that* exists in all forms of music."

In 2003, Our Lady Peace teamed up for the second time with producer Bob Rock to record their sixth album, *Vampires*. The recording process became an intense and arduous journey that consumed the group for the better part of a full year. "We went from making what we felt was a great record—and the band being the happiest in our career—to being close to breaking up," Taggart admits. "We'd complete ten songs, tour for a month, then come back and say, 'Those songs are good, but they're not where they need to be yet.' We kept writing and probably recorded close to forty-five songs with Bob. We eventually became completely excited about the music."

In early sessions for *Vampires*, Taggart changed his approach from hitting hard to playing quieter "to get a bigger sound," something he learned when Elvin Jones played on OLP's third album, *Happiness Is Not A Fish That You Can Catch*. "When I sat behind Elvin's kit and hit the drums, I couldn't get anything out of them," Jeremy says. "But when he played, they sounded *huge*. From watching Elvin, I learned how to effectively play much quieter. In turn, that affected the way I hear music and how I play with other musicians. I don't play anything like I did two years ago, and that's a good thing." **Gail Worley**

DRUM DATES This month's important events in drumming history

Happy Birthday!

Hal Blaine
(session great): 2/5/29

Mick Avory
(The Kinks): 2/15/44

Harvey Mason
(session giant): 2/22/47

Joe English
(Wings): 2/7/49

Nigel Olsson
(Elton John): 2/10/49

Jerry Shirley
(Humble Pie): 2/4/52

Robbie Bachman
(Bachman Turner Overdrive): 2/18/53

Manny Elias
(Tears For Fears/Julian Lennon): 2/21/53

Vinnie Colaiuta
(drum giant): 2/5/56

Gregg Field
(jazz great): 2/21/56

Jerry Marotta
(studio): 2/6/57

Taylor Hawkins
(Foo Fighters): 2/10/68

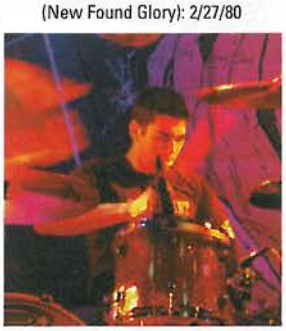
Pat Wilson
(Weezer): 2/1/69

Ron Welty
(The Offspring): 2/1/71

Johnny Rabb
(independent): 2/29/72

Scott Phillips
(Creed, Alter Bridge): 2/22/73

Cyrus Bolooki
(New Found Glory): 2/27/80



Chick Webb was born on 2/10/09.

Baby Dodds passed away on 2/14/59, **Karen Carpenter** on 2/4/83, and **Tony Williams** on 2/23/97.

On 2/12/64, **Tony Williams** records the live Miles Davis album *My Funny Valentine*.

On 2/7/76, Paul Simon's single "Fifty Ways To Leave Your Lover," with **Steve Gadd** on drums, hits number-1 on the *Billboard* charts.

On 2/21/90, Metallica, featuring **Lars Ulrich**, wins the best metal performance category for *One* at the 32nd annual Grammy Awards.

On 2/21/01, U2, with **Larry Mullen**, wins a Grammy for song of the year for the single "Beautiful Day."

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Jack Mouse

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NEWS

Gregg Bissonette has recently played drums on projects for Ryan Cabrerra (including the hit single "On The Way Down"), The Brian Setzer Orchestra, Kyle Riabko, Robert Downey Jr., Jeff Lynn and ELO, Steve Vai, Lou Rawls, Matt Bissonette, Josh Kelly, and Richard Marx. He also did sessions for episodes of the *American Dreams* TV show, and played triple drums (with **Vinnie Colaiuta** and **Curt Bisquera**) on the film *The Bourne Supremacy*. And look for Gregg's new Hudson Music DVD, which will be out in January '05.

Eric Sock is on Stroke 9's latest, *All In*.

Eddie Hartness is on Eddie From Ohio's ninth album, *This Is Me*.

After twelve years with Spyro Gyra, earlier this year **Joel Rosenblatt** left the band. He has been quite busy of late with several projects.

Ralph Humphrey has been doing dates with Natalie Cole. He can be heard on new CDs by the band Babaghanoush and Prasanna Ramaswamy. Ralph also continues to teach at the Los Angeles Music Academy.

Bernard Davis, **Steve Ferrone**, **Ricky Lawson**, and **Will Kennedy** are on Anita Baker's *My Everything*. **Bashiri Johnson** is on percussion.

Brendan Buckley has been touring with Minnie Driver.

Former Tears For Fears drummer **Manny Elias** is on Spankdaddi's debut, *Talk To Me*.

Megadeth's first eight albums have recently been reissued with unreleased tracks, demos, and alternate mixes. **Gars Samuelson**, **Chuck Behler**, **Nick Menza**, and **Jimmy DeGrasso** are the drummers featured.

Simon Wright is on Dio's *Master Of The Moon*.

Justin Burkes is on Halfacre Gunroom's latest, *Wrecked*.

Jerry Marotta is on *Cha Cha With The Hellboys*, which features Tony Levin and Robert Fripp.

Tyler Stewart and Barenaked Ladies recently taped a Fox TV pilot for a variety show tentatively titled *The Barenaked Ladies Variety Show*. The show features music and comedy skits along with guest actors.

Shane Evans is on the new Collective Soul album, *Youth*.

Phil Ehart is on *Sail On*, a new Kansas box set featuring a DVD of live performances and band videos.

Jon Wurster (Superchunk, Marah) is on ex-Guided By Voices guitarist Doug Gillard's *Salamander*. The album is on Pink Frost Records, which is run by New York drummer and *Big Takeover* founder **Jack Rabid**. Jack himself can be heard on *Lessons In Redemption* by Last Burning Embers, also on Pink Frost.

Ilan Rubin, the winner of *Modern Drummer*'s 2000 Undiscovered Drummer contest (in the under-18 category), is on *Scenic*, a new record by Denver Harbor.

Jerry Leoni is on Lettermen albums *The Lettermen Solos* and *The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year*.

Les DeMerle has a new CD out, *Hittin' The Blue Notes Volume Two*.

Joey Scott played drums and co-produced Starwood's *If It Ain't Broke, Break It*.

Jimmy DeGrasso has been on clinic tours in the UK, Poland, and Canada. He's also been doing dates with Montrose and Marty Friedman. DeGrasso recently opened his own drum shop, San Jose Pro Drum (www.sanjoseprodrum.com). Last, but certainly not least, congratulations to Jimmy and his wife on the birth of twin boys.

Chad Smith and The Red Hot Chili Peppers surprised a packed house at The Ramones' 30th Anniversary Celebration by playing a five-song set of Ramones songs.

Chuck Tilley has been on the road with Dolly Parton for the country star's most extensive tour in decades.

Adrian Erlandsson has been on the Headbanger's Ball tour with Cradle Of Filth, along with his brother **Daniel Erlandsson**, who is with Arch Enemy.

Steve Houghton was recently named associate professor of percussion at Indiana University.

Congratulations to **Stanton Moore** on the birth of his daughter, Madelaine Ruth.

Yanni's **Charlie Adams** has a new DVD out, *Stories And Solos*. For more information and a clip of Charlie performing, go to www.moderndrummer.com.

MD Radio **To hear some of the artists mentioned in this month's *Update*, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.**

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Audix i5 Dynamic Microphone

A New Horse In The Corral

HITS

great sound on snare and toms

works well in a wide variety of applications

rugged construction

very good value

by Mark Parsons

The Audix i5 is not a tiny mic' that clips almost invisibly to your tom hoop. It's not a large-diaphragm condenser intended to be a world-class overhead mic'. Nor is it specifically designed to go inside your bass drum and yield the "kick of doom" sound. In fact, technically it's not a drum-specific mic' at all. So why are we, a *drum* magazine, reviewing what seems to be a relatively generic, hand held-size, all-purpose dynamic microphone?

Well, can you think of any mic's that fit the description above and that are considered almost indispensable when it comes to, let's say...*recording a snare drum*? Mic's that are owned and used by almost every band in existence, for every task from reinforcing drums to guitar cabinets to vocals? Hmm...?

Right. The utilitarian "workhorse" dynamic instrument mic'—usually in the guise of a Shure SM57—is in reality the most widely used drum microphone. Audix has designed and built a contemporary version of that dynamic instrument mic'. But it's by no means a clone. It's Audix's own particular take on the all-purpose "stage & studio" instrument microphone.

This is not a "shoot-out" article, where we do a head-to-head comparison of every specification and nuance of two or more competing products. However, it would be pointless (and just about impossible) to analyze the i5 without making some references to the SM57. So where applicable we'll let you know how this latest offering from Audix performs in relation to a time-tested mic' that so many readers are sure to be familiar with.

This i5 is shown attached to a drum using Audix's D-Vice clamp/gooseneck mount (sold separately).

The Facts

The i5 is a transformerless dynamic microphone with a cardioid polar pattern. Its stated frequency response is between 50 Hz and 16 kHz. Judging by the supplied graph, the dynamic range of this specification appears to be +/- 3 dB. The frequency response chart shows a broad, gentle (3 dB) boost in the bass region from approximately 80 Hz up to around 250 Hz. There is a slight reduction in the lower midrange at around 500-600 Hz, then a boost through the upper mids and into the treble range of approximately 5 dB (reaching from 3 kHz to 9 kHz).

The polar chart shows the i5 to have a fairly linear off-axis response. This, coupled with the tight cardioid pattern, means it shouldn't do weird things to the rest of your kit when positioned on a specific drum.

Listen Up

We started out on the most likely drumset application for the i5: the snare. Getting a great sound here was a no-brainer: Start with a good-sounding drum, place the i5 in the usual spot (a couple of inches over the head, angled in) and let it fly. The sound was very similar to what you'd get with an SM57, with some minor differences. The Audix had a hair more high-end articulation and upper bass warmth. If you like the classic 57 "close-miked snare tone" then you'll love the i5 in that application.

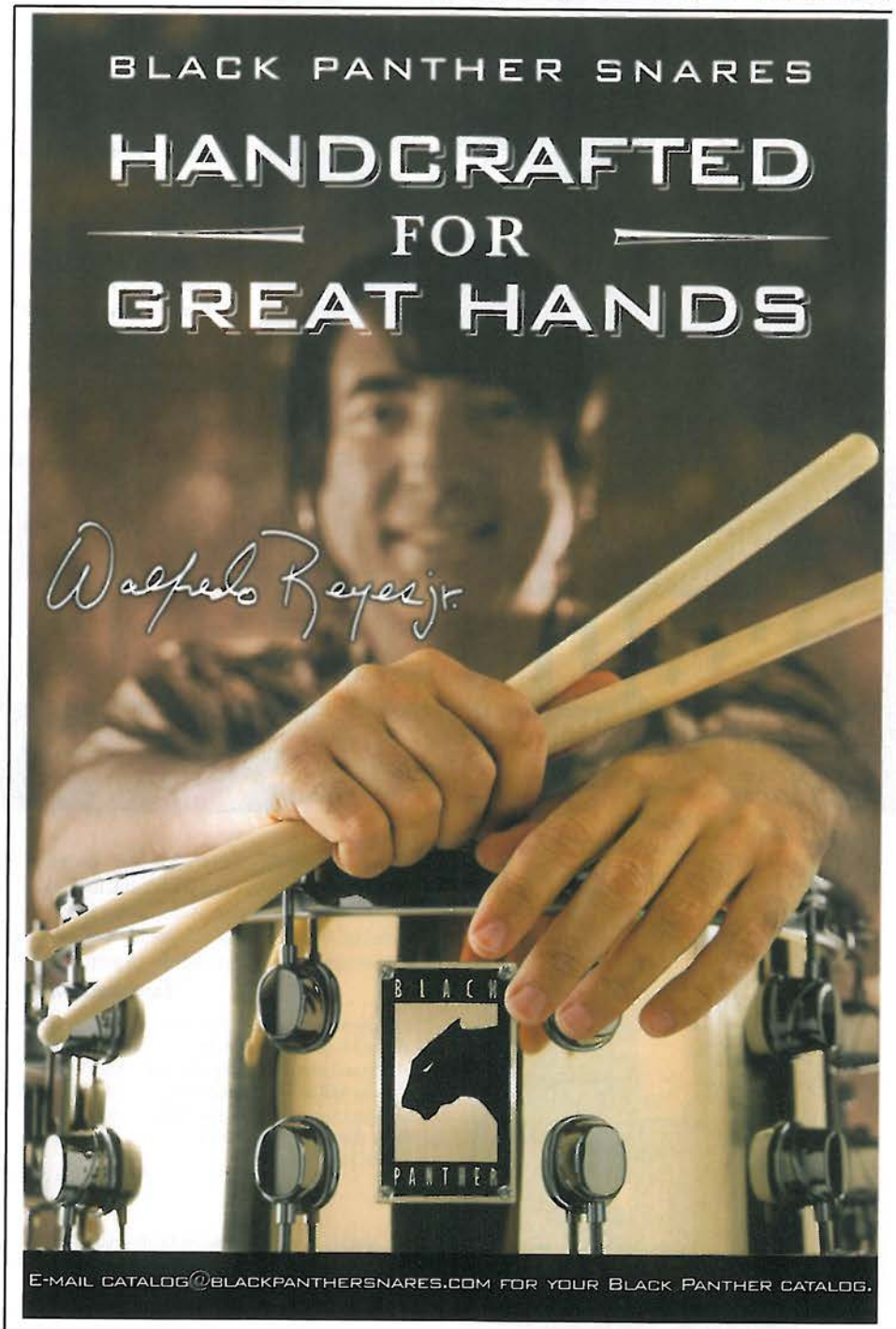
Next up was a small tom, and again the i5 was in the same ballpark as the 57. But the i5 had a little more "bloom" to the upper bass, and it delivered a little more of the stick attack.

We then took a quick detour from the drumset to try the i5 on a pair of congas (a 10" quinto and an 11" conga). We were rewarded with a clear, full sound that would work well in either a studio or live setting.

We then returned to the drumkit. As we progressed through it, going from snare to small tom to larger tom and on down, we began to notice something. With sources that *didn't* generate a lot of bass output (such as a typically tuned 5x14 snare or a 10" tom), the i5 sounded similar to a 57, with the additional slight enhancements already noted. But when we moved to instruments that had some serious bottom, certain unique characteristics of the i5 became more apparent. For example, on a deeply-tuned 14" tom, the i5 had a tad more articulation (as on the smaller drums), but the increased weight to the sound was noticeable.

Neither the i5 nor any other multi-purpose dynamic mic' is really designed for miking a kick drum. But they frequently get drafted for that task in a pinch, so we decided to give the i5 a whirl. The first position we tried was outside the kick, several inches off the front head, where the i5 sounded like a 57 with (you guessed it) a little more depth and articulation. Okay, cool. But when we placed the mic' well *inside* the kick (facing the beater contact spot) we got a surprise. The i5 had significantly more weight on the bottom, the mids were smoother, and the beater articulation was more apparent. In other words, the i5 actually put out a fairly respectable kick drum sound. And that was with no processing whatsoever. When we added just a little EQ, it was *rocking*—kind of like a cross between a 57 and Audix's own kick-monster, the D6.

So along with its warm bottom, smooth mids, and high frequency extension, the i5 also has a great proximity effect going for it. A knowledgeable user can effectively employ



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Electronic Review

this characteristic as a tone control by simply moving the mic' a few inches closer to or further from the source.

Throughout the test period, the i5's tight cardioid pattern performed as promised: It provided very good isolation of the intended source, such as keeping the hats out of the snare and the cymbals out of the toms. Well done.

Conclusion

The Audix i5 truly is a multi-purpose microphone. It sounds great on a wide variety of sources, but it particularly shines on snare drums and toms. It's similar enough to the industry standard "workhorse" to make it instantly and easily usable, but it also has some subtle enhancements that give it its own personality. And it comes in a rugged, cost-effective package. Sounds like a winner in my book.

So does this mean I'm going to get rid of all the industry standard dynamic' instrument mic's I have laying around? Nope. There is no one perfect mic' for every application. Microphone preferences are very subjective, and having a variety of colors in your sonic palette can only be a good thing. But I've got to tell you, instead of boxing up the test mic's and sending them back to Audix, I'll be sending a check. These babies are way too good to let get away!

THE NUMBERS

Type: Cardioid dynamic, transformerless
Frequency Response: 50 Hz – 16 kHz
Maximum SPL: 140 dB
Housing: Cast zinc-alloy
Finish: Black e-coat
Dimensions: 1½" diameter (tapering to ⅞") x 5½"
Weight: 6½ oz.
List price (with clip and pouch) **$179**
(503) 682-6933, www.audix.com.

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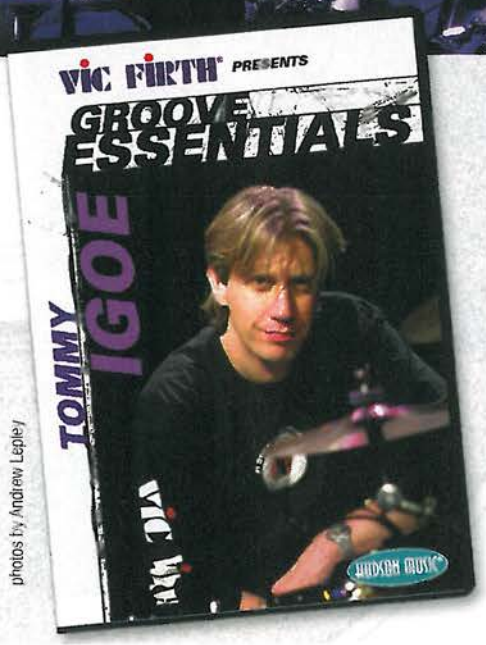

photos by Andrew Lepley

Based on the *Groove Essentials* poster created by Tommy Igoe and Vic Firth, this DVD presents 47 essential grooves from Rock, Jazz and R&B/Funk to World/Ethnic music. Drum artist, teacher and author Tommy Igoe demonstrates each pattern at the drums and also with a rhythm track featuring some of NY's top musicians. Mastering these patterns will greatly expand your knowledge while allowing you to become a more well-rounded player with the confidence to perform in virtually any musical situation.

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- Tommy thoroughly explains each groove breaking each down to it's basic elements and performing each one with and without a live band rhythm track at two different tempos.
- As a special bonus a **free Groove Essentials poster** (courtesy of Vic Firth drum sticks), is included, containing fully-notated examples of each groove.

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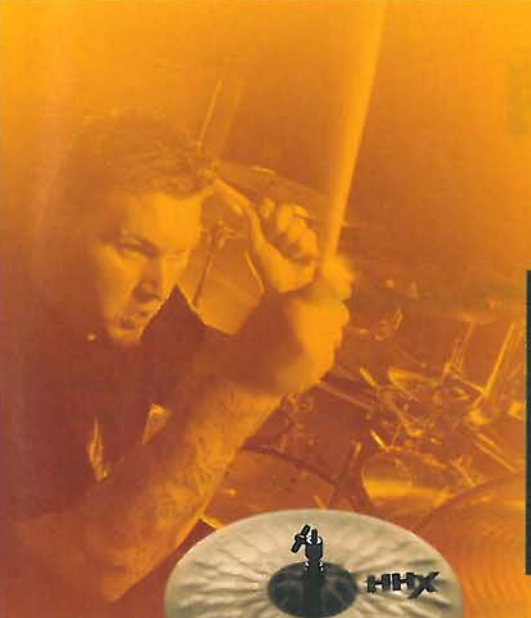

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- CRISP BELL, BRIGHT DEFINITION AND CONTROLLED WASH.

AA ROCK CRASH
- HIGH-POWERED, PENETRATING, PUSHY AND LOUD.

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CLE Ratio Drums

New Sizing Concepts Produce New Thunder

HITS

innovative sizes and bearing edge design

outstanding warmth, sustain, and projection

solid construction

eye-catching finish

MISSES

tension rods are stiff to adjust

quality of "generic" hardware doesn't match that of drums

Text by Phil Ferraro
Photos by Jim Esposito

In March of 1999, drummer and woodworker Michael Latini set out to build a drumkit of outstanding quality that would produce unsurpassed warmth and sustain. After three years of intense research and development, CLE Drums was born.

MD first reviewed examples of Michael's work in the April 2003 issue. That review cited the CLE drums for their construction quality, unique sizes, warmth, and tonality. The drums reviewed this time add some unique design elements. Let's take a closer look.

The Shells

As a custom drum company, CLE is willing to go the extra mile to meet the needs and desires of their customers. Shell construction ranging from 5- to 10-ply is offered, cut to any size and dimension, with or without reinforcing rings. Other options, such as die-cast hoops, head choices, Gauger Aluminum RIMS mounts, and tom-mounting hardware, are also available.

At the heart of each CLE drum we reviewed is a North American rock maple shell made by Keller Wood Products. Toms featured 6-ply construction, the bass drum utilized 8 plies, and the snare had 10—all without reinforcing rings. Exterior bearing edges on CLE shells are cut to match the radius of the drumhead for optimum head contact and maximum transfer of energy between head and shell. This, combined with a 60° inner countercut on the toms and bass (45° on the snare) helped contribute

Our review kit featured distinctive spherical lugs.

to the goal of greater warmth and sustain. Inside and out these shells were *flawless*.

Applying A Little Math

One of the unique design elements of our review kit that I mentioned earlier is the concept of drum ratio sizing which CLE has pioneered. "Ratio sizing" refers to the ratio of the depth of the shell expressed as a percentage of the diameter. For example, a 9x12 shell has a 75% ratio, since 9 is 75% of 12.

As Michael Latini explains, "When drums have a consistent size ratio between them, they have more of a balanced sound and are easier to tune in relation to each other." Our review set featured toms that had a 75% drum ratio—7½x10, 9x12, 10½x14, 12x16—as did the 16½x22 bass drum. The 5¼x14 snare featured a 37.5% ratio (½ of 75%) because snare drums traditionally are shallower in depth.

More Details

Another distinctive feature of CLE drums is their lug design. Machined out of solid aluminum, the chrome-plated, low-mass ball & pedestal lugs have a shell contact area of less than ½ square inch. They're attached at nodal points on the shell, and a radius that's cut on their mounting surface eliminates the need for energy-absorbing gaskets. All the components of the drum vibrate fully together, again enhancing the drum's overall tone, resonance, and sustain.

The snare and toms were fitted with 2.3-mm triple-flanged chromed-steel hoops, as well as tension rods with polycarbonate washers. The snare drum was fitted with a Trick GS 007 strainer and 20-count snares. Toms came with DSS suspension mounts (standard) and ball-joint tom arms. The bass drum included an optional tom-mounting plate, telescoping spurs, 10-ply maple hoops, and a hoop protector. Complete sets of Remo and Attack heads were provided by CLE for the purpose of this review.

CLE offers an impressive list of eye-catching finishing options, such as Flakes, Pearls, and Kandys in satin oil varnish or high gloss lacquer. Two types of stains are used in a six-step process for color consistency and richness of hue. Shells then undergo a twenty-seven-step hands-on process, over a four-day period, to achieve an ultra–high gloss finish. The Golden Tangerine Pearl Kandy finish on our set utilized a combination of Italian polyester with a high-gloss clear coat on top. Gorgeous.

The Sound

The first thing I noticed about the sound of the CLE drums was how resonant and loud they were. One might expect this amount of volume and projection from drums that are larger in diameter and/or depth. As stated earlier, CLE's objective is to create drums that offer unsurpassed warmth and maximum sustain. The concepts of drum ratio sizing and radius bearing edges, along with CLE's low-mass lugs, have certainly helped to achieve that goal.

The Trick GS 007 throw-off is an available option on CLE snare drums.

A problem with the tom mount: In a normal set-up position, the ball adjustment casings touched each other.

Toms

I tuned the toms a number of different ways for the sake of testing (top and bottom heads the same, top looser/bottom tighter, top tighter/bottom looser), switching between Attack and Remo Renaissance heads. The toms consistently produced warm, dulcet tones with little effort, and they seemed to resonate forever. A balanced sound from drum to drum was clearly evident, with no dissonant or dead individual toms in the mix. This enhanced the ease with which I could tune each drum in relation to the others.

Snare

The CLE snare drum generated a combination of warmth and crispness that only a quality maple shell can offer. The hi-tech Trick GS 007 strainer (an optional feature) offers a smooth and silent 180° swivel-arm snare release and an easy-turning fine tensioning adjustment. Nickel Drumworks strainers are standard on CLE snares, and they're no slouches in the performance department, either.

The 10-lug, double–receiving nut design offered stable tuning while facilitating a lively response over a wide dynamic range. The drum was extremely sensitive and articulate across the entire head. From a whisper brush-stroke to an ear-cracking rimshot, this would be an excellent multi-purpose snare drum in anyone's musical arsenal.

Bass Drum

Of all the drums sent for this review, CLE's 16½x22 bass drum was my hands-down favorite. I've rarely heard a bass drum sound so deep, articulate, and resonant, with little or no tweaking or dampening. The more I played this

drum, the more it reminded me of something or someone. It finally came to me while listening to my car stereo. Over the years, my concept of "the perfect bass drum sound" was that of legendary jazz great and double-bass innovator Louie Bellson. Our CLE bass drum came close to capturing this "perfect sound," right out of the box. I don't know what higher accolade I can give, aside from saying that I wish this bass drum were mine.

Further Thoughts

Even with all the foregoing praise for CLE drums, there's always room for improvement in any new endeavor. For example, the ease with which the tension rods turned in the solid machined lugs varied greatly from lug to lug. Some were quite stiff and hard to turn.

In fairness to CLE, this is a common problem with this type of lug design. Threads machined directly into a solid lug body create an exact and "unforgiving" fit between the lug and the tension rod. Any residue left after machining can exacerbate the problem with squeaks and groans. Drummers have been on guard against thread-stripping on this type of lug since the days of vaudeville. Today, many manufacturers employ a certain amount of lubrication to alleviate the problem.

While discussing this issue with Michael Latini, I was surprised to hear him espouse a very different philosophy. CLE lugs deliberately do *not* receive thread lubrication. Michael's theory is that stiffer lugs are preferable because they hold their torque more firmly, thus resisting tension-rod loosening and drum detuning.

On this point we disagree. I've always believed that consistent, easy-moving tension rods are a key element in proper tuning. Considering the advantages of today's high-tech lubricants, I think the CLE lugs would benefit from their use. If loss of tension or detuning is the issue, there are many reliable accessories on the market that address that problem without affecting the ease or consistency of the tensioning/tuning process.

My only other issue with the CLE drums deals with hardware accessory options. Our review set was fitted with a bass drum receiving plate for the tom-tom mounting arms. Because of a design flaw in that plate, the receiving holes were machined too close together, causing the tom arms to touch at the adjustable ball joint sections when set to the same height. This contact caused some rattling between the toms and the mounting arms. Additionally, memory clamps that were included with the tom arms failed to lock up properly with the bass drum receiving plate. With so many excellent brands of hardware available on the market today, the quality of "generic" hardware should never be an issue when talking about custom drums of this caliber.

Conclusions

CLE Ratio drums are a welcome addition to the percussion scene. With their innovative ideas and outstanding sound (combined with improved hardware fittings in the future) they're likely to become a significant name in the high-quality custom drum arena.

THE NUMBERS

Configuration: 7½x10, 9x12, 10½x14, 12x16 toms (6-ply maple), 16½x22 bass (8-ply maple), 5¼x14 snare (10-ply maple), solid aluminum low-mass lugs, 2.3-mm steel triple-flanged hoops, mounting hardware, Trick GS 007 strainer (optional), and 20-count snares. Custom colors and finishes available at extra cost.

List price **$5,490**

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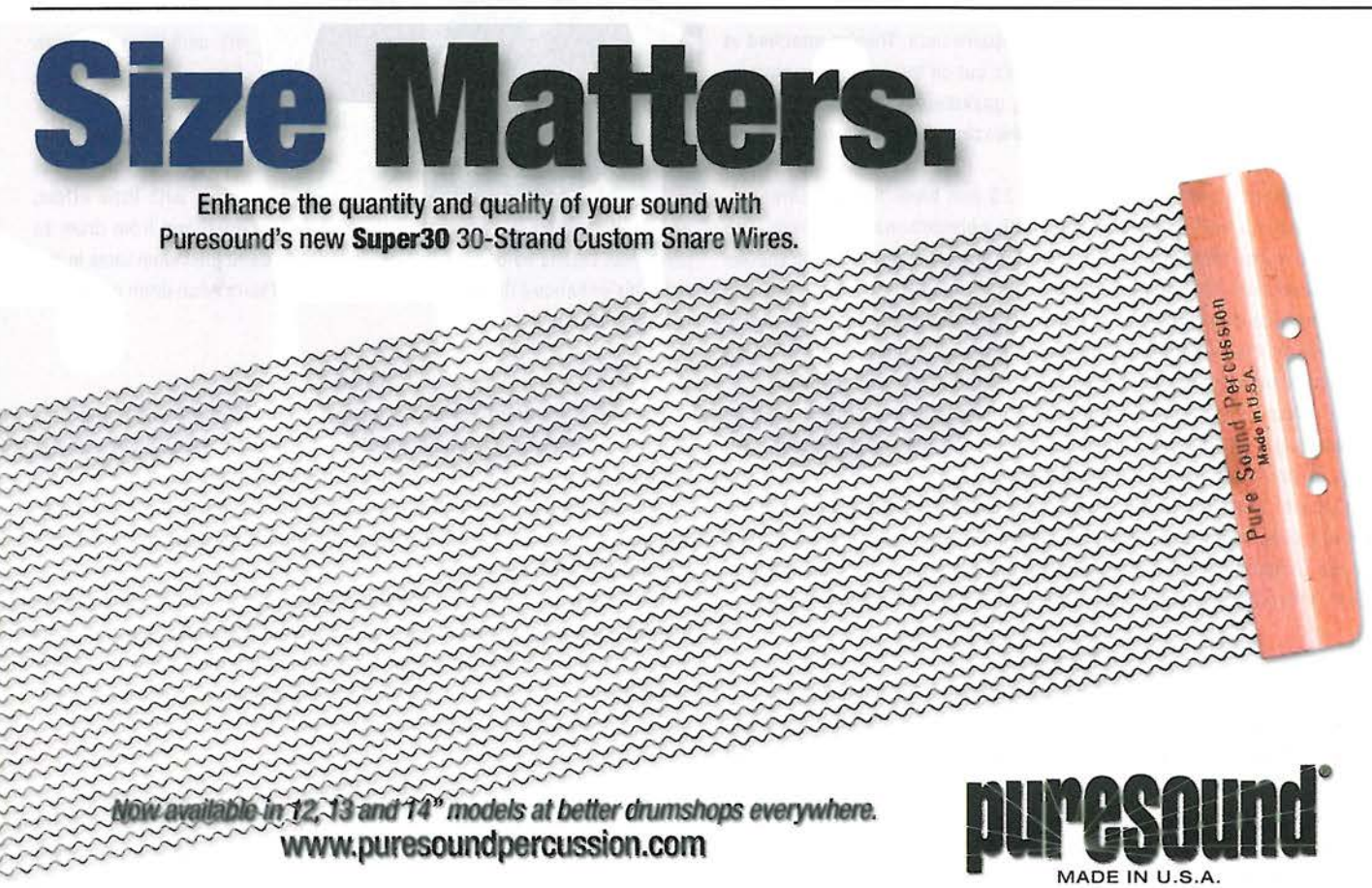

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New Zildjian Models

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HITS

Complex rides create dark, earthy tones

Complex rides have sensitivity with strong projection

ZBT 20" ride has excellent projection and bell tone

ZBT crashes and splashes rival some pro models for tone quality and projection

MISSES

Complex rides produce noticeable low-frequency "after-hum"

ZBT hi-hats are subdued and inarticulate

by Phil Ferraro

The folks at Zildjian have been busy recently, developing cymbal models at the professional as well as entry levels. Let's take a look at the newest offerings in each category.

K Custom Dry Complex Rides

Zildjian's 22" K Custom Dry Complex rides, inspired by jazz innovator Bill Stewart, have been generating quite a bit of industry buzz. In fact, it took over two months for *MD* to get a pair to review, due to artist and dealer interest. Let's see if it was worth the wait.

First Impressions

At first glance, K Custom Dry Complex rides look more like works in progress than finished cymbals. They're larger and more subdued in hue than most rides, and they boast the largest bell of any K Custom model. With a rough traditional lathed finish and extensive hammering on the top side only (the underside is "lightly scored" to help control overtones), these cymbals reflect the complex tone and character that gives them their name. Don't expect smooth refinement from these new Ks. What they project is a strong, dark, "primal" edge.

Frame Of Reference

From the moment I gave the rides their first whacks, I was struck by their unusual mix of sound characteristics. Words like "raw," "aggressive," and "elemental" came to mind. But conflicting terms like "warm" and "cool" also struck me. These cymbals were "dry" in terms of strong stick definition, but they also emitted a "wet" tidal surge of sonic wash when played into a frenzy. Though dark in tone, in typical K fashion (with the 22" thin lower in pitch than the medium thin), they could also be coaxed toward lighter, "airier" ride sounds when properly caressed toward the edge. Marry the sonic characteristics of a warm K ride to those of an aggressive China cymbal, and you have the new K Custom Dry Complex ride.

Other Points Of Interest

The K Custom Dry Complex rides offered a piercing bell sound that was more metallic and gritty than "sweet," great for those who appreciate a more "earthy" bell tone. As for quick crashing or punctuating when riding, if you like your crashes low and more on the legato side, without piercing cut, these rides can work for you. One word of caution, however: If you're in the recording studio or out on an extremely low-volume gig, watch out for a noticeable low frequency "after-hum" that lingers after the last drumstick strike. Make sure to dampen the cymbal quickly with your fingers. If you're into cymbal effects, these new rides offer some rich pedal tones when played on the outer edge, as well as some nice brush sounds when scraped or fanned.

Final Thoughts

The new K Custom Dry Complex rides certainly aren't all-purpose models. But they're likely to appeal to the iconoclastic drummer searching for something unique to help express his or her personal creativity, as well as to the mainstream player looking for something different to expand his or her sonic palette.

The New ZBT Line

In 1998, with spiraling price increases over the preceding decade fueling an explosion of interest in the entry- and mid-level percussion market, Zildjian decided to re-address the whole concept of "affordable" cymbals with their ZBT (Zildjian Bronze Technology) cymbal line. Customer feedback over the past six years, along with intensive research & development, has led to the development of an all-new and improved ZBT line. Employing an advanced sheet bronze alloy, finer lathing grooves, extensive traditional hammering techniques, and a sonically dynamic shape, the ZBT line purports to offer sound and quality rivaling that of cast cymbals, at a more affordable price.

First Impressions

The first thing one notices about the ZBT line is that these cymbals don't look "low-end." A mixture of fine radial grooves and interspersed hammer prints, along with Zildjian's brilliant finish, produce a highly reflective, slightly prismatic effect that's a real eye-catcher. My next point of interest was how well the new ZBT cymbals were sonically matched, as a group. When I tapped them lightly, just to get an idea of their tone, the cymbals seemed to be in relative tune with each other. There were no clunkers or weird overtones. The overall consistency and quality control was excellent.

20" Ride

The ZBT 20" ride was a nice find. When played with my usual wood-tipped 5As, it produced a clean, crisp tone with strong stick definition on active ride patterns, without a lot of over-wash buildup. The bell was an instrument unto itself—extremely cutting, with a bright musical tone. Overall, this ride had plenty of raw power and projection for heavy metal or hard rock.

18" Crash/Ride

In my experience, crash/ride cymbals rarely serve their dual purposes equally well. They're either an adequate ride and a poor crash, or vice versa. The ZBT 18" crash/ride is no exception. Though lower in pitch and projection than the 20" ZBT ride, it offered a warmer tone, with just enough wash, shimmer, and stick definition to fill the sonic vista. As such, it would make a nice alternate ride in low- to mid-volume acoustic pop and jazz situations. On the flip side, however, I had to exert some real effort to get even a weakly projected crash response. So as a crash cymbal, it didn't sell me.

18" China

The 18" ZBT China offered an interesting blend of musical colors. Though it was higher in pitch than any China I've ever played, this cymbal offered plenty of "trash" and projection when mounted upside-down and played aggressively. Yet it acted as a convincing alternate ride (on the inner bow) or effects cymbal (on the flanged outer bow and the bell) when played in the traditional upright configuration. Nice.

Crashes

Of the 14", 16", and 18" crashes sent for this review, the 16" and 18" sizes were the most impressive. Their sound was rich, full, and bright. The downside was the need to really lay into these crashes in order to make them fully project and sing out. In fairness to the ZBT, I've played some "professional" model cymbals that had the same problem, and cost a lot more. So if you don't mind a little extra effort when you play, and you like to save money, what have you got to lose?

Hi-Hats

The 13" and 14" ZBT hi-hats were the weakest entry in the new line. Though they produced strong chick, splash, and bark sounds when played with the foot, the same could not be said when I employed sticks. Hi-hat patterns sounded weak, shallow, and subdued, without the crispness required to properly project and articulate. Though the ZBT hats are *far* better than entry-level/student cymbals of years past, they fall short when compared to the performance level of the rest of the line.

Splashes

The true surprises of the ZBT line were the 8" and 10" splash cymbals. I was amazed at the sound quality, which compared very favorably to that of professional splashes. Only under direct, side by side comparison could a discernable difference be observed. (The ZBTs had a slightly higher pitch, with a little less projection and sustain.) So if you're looking to add a fresh—and inexpensive—musical voice to your percussion arsenal, these splashes are well worth your consideration.

Conclusion

Zildjian has certainly raised the bar for entry-level cymbals with their new ZBT line. In fact, some models rival the sound quality of far more expensive cymbals. New drummers with limited funds would do well to give these cymbals a serious listen. Professionals hunting for an inexpensive sonic "gem in the rough" would be wise to do the same.

THE NUMBERS

22" K Custom Dry Complex ride, thin or medium-thin	$522
6" ZBT splash	$ 66
8" ZBT splash	$ 58
13" ZBT hi-hats	$144
14" ZBT hi-hats	$160
14" ZBT crash	$ 80
16" ZBT crash	$104
18" ZBT crash, crash/ride, and China	$121
20" ZBT ride	$148

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smooth, quiet action

removable legs provide stability and positioning flexibility

hi-hat assembly comes complete with mounting hardware and bag

MISSES

spring-tension adjustment can be awkward to reach

by Rick Van Horn

Although cable remote hi-hats have been around for quite a few years now, artists like Terry Bozzio and Marco Minnemann have recently brought them to the drumming public's attention anew. More and more drummers are considering the musical potential of utilizing at least one remote hi-hat on their kits.

With this in mind, Drum Workshop has introduced their totally new 9502LB cable remote hi-hat. The unit is designed with features that make the pedal section more stable than that of its 5000-series predecessor, and the hi-hat section more compact and easier to fit onto a kit.

The Pedal Section

To begin at the bottom, the pedal section features a folding footboard that stays attached to the base casting when secured in the folded position. A quick turn of two drumkey-operated bolts locks the footboard and baseplate in the open position for playing. A ball-bearing hinge helps give the pedal a smooth and silent action.

The 9502 also features two legs attached to a rotating collar. When the pedal is used on a stand-alone basis, these legs provide excellent stability. If you need a more compact unit for positioning purposes, or if you secure the pedal unit to another stand or pedal, the legs can be removed easily, leaving only their collar bracket. This collar can be tightened so as not to rattle, and then forgotten. It won't get in the way of anything.

When I tried to place the pedal where I wanted it on my kit, the way in which the cable extended to the upper hi-hat section tended to pull the pedal over, sideways. It was a simple matter to use one of the legs to brace the pedal against the pull of the cable and thus keep the pedal upright. Eliminating the other leg allowed me to position the pedal up close against my bass drum. I really appreciated this flexibility.

DW 505 drop-lock clutch

The Upper Section

The upper section of the hi-hat is an inch shorter than its predecessor: 16" from the bottom-cymbal holder down to the base where the cable attaches. It's also lighter and less massive. The lockable spring-tension adjustment is a dial set into the base casting. It can be a little awkward to reach, depending on how the unit is mounted. But once you get it set, you probably won't need to reach it again.

The 9502LB is fitted with DW's compact 505 Drop-Lock clutch. It holds the top cymbal securely in the open position, and releases it quickly when the rubber-coated latch arm is tapped with the hand or a stick. As for the removable

The MG1 clamp connects the hi-hat section of the 9502LB to the MG2 self-clamping arm. That arm can be attached to a cymbal stand or drum-rack pipe.

wire cable, 8' is the most popular length, but 2', 4', 6', 10', and custom lengths are also available. High-tech fittings at each end of the cable help to promote the hi-hat's natural playing feel.

Additional Features

The 9502LB comes complete with MG-1 and MG-2 Mega clamps. The MG-2 is a 12"-long arm ending in its own clamp for attaching to another stand. The MG-1 attaches the hi-hat anywhere along the MG-2's arm for flexible positioning. The clamps hold securely and provide a stable platform for the upper hi-hat section. The 9502LB also ships with a uniquely shaped carrying bag that features a separate compartment for the mounting hardware.

Conclusion

Whether you use one cable remote hi-hat or several, you're looking for smooth, natural action, sturdy mounting, and positioning flexibility. The DW 9502LB offers all of these characteristics in spades. The price may seem daunting at first, but when you consider that it covers not only the hi-hat assembly, but also the mounting hardware and the carrying bag (which you'd otherwise need to buy separately), it starts to look more reasonable. Factor in DW's reputation for construction quality and dependability over long use, and you *might* just see a bargain.

THE NUMBERS

DW 9502LB cable remote hi-hat **$469.99**
Includes DW 505 drop clutch, MG1 and MG2 mounting clamps, and carrying bag
(805) 485-6999, www.dwdrums.com.

THE ORIGINAL LONG ISLAND DRUMCENTER™
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Whitney Nesting Penguin Drumset

Funny Name...Serious Innovation

HITS

kit is light, compact, and portable

drums have excellent warmth and tonality

kick has surprisingly big sound

MISSES

placement of snare throw-off could prove awkward

by Mark Parsons

The Whitney Penguin drum line gets its name from the fact that the diameter of each shell is larger than that of its heads, making the drums "fat in the middle"—like a Penguin. *MD*'s December 2001 review of the original Penguin drums highlighted features like threaded inserts set into the "collar" of the drum (the shelf where the bearing edge diameter expands out to the total shell diameter). This eliminates the need for lugs, thus reducing weight and creating a very clean look.

That review also explained Whitney's "Egg Basket" concept, which combines a riser for the bass drum with a rack base to support the rest of the kit. The Nesting Penguin series reviewed this time came about from a desire to save space when transporting the kit.

The Nesting Instinct

Of course, it's possible to "nest" any drums that will fit inside each other. But the downside of doing that with "standard" drums is the time and effort it takes to replace and re-tune the heads each time. Whitney's answer to this dilemma is the "Stay-Tuned" head concept. In this design, the edge/collar section on the resonant sides of the kick drum and large tom are separate pieces from the rest of their shells. The head (still under tension), bearing edge, and collar of each drum can be quickly attached and detached from the rest of the shell via four thumbscrews. This allows you to remove the bottom heads and use the insides of the larger drums for storing the smaller drums.

In practice, with a four-piece kit you'd place the small tom (inside a padded bag) in the large tom, and the snare and large tom (also in bags) into the kick. All of those drums then fit into a 16x18 case. The hardware (including the Egg Basket) fits into a hardware bag. You grab your cymbals, and you're off.

The Kit

Our review set was a four-piece kit consisting of a 16x18 kick, a 5x13 snare, a 7x10 tom, and a 9x14 tom. The bearing edges were 6-ply maple rings, while the 9-ply collars and 3-ply shells were birch. Although suspension mounts are available as an option, the toms and snare of our test kit had shell-mounted receivers that clamped onto L-rods.

The snare throw-off was a conventional chrome-plated unit, but Whitney also offers an original design on their high-end snares that leaves nothing protruding from the side of the shell. The snare throw-off was bolted to the shell opposite the drum mount, which places the throw-off in an awkward spot between the player's legs once the drum is mounted. Many drummers like the throw-off near the nine o'clock position so that it can be easily operated by the left hand while playing. This is, admittedly, nit-picking an otherwise very nice drum, and I'm sure that Whitney will place the throw-off wherever you choose. But it's something to be aware of if you order a drum from them.

Although they use the same basic shell design, one construction difference between Whitney's toms and snares is that the snares have struts within the shell to reinforce the drum against the higher tension that snare drums are

typically subjected to. These are small dowels (approx. 3/8" in diameter) that span between the top and bottom shell collars. There were eight struts in our eight-lug snare drum.

Our review kit was finished in a nice purple satin stain, and came fitted with optional wood hoops. The combination of the natural maple hoops and the purple, lug-less shells gave the kit a very classy look.

Also included were an Egg Basket stand, with mounts for the toms and snare and two cymbal arms, as well as the bags and cases mentioned above. We were also given a second snare to review: a 6x10 model with flanged hoops, sporting a "natural" satin finish.

All the drums were fitted with Aquarian heads. The toms and snares had Satin Finish coated single-ply batters and Classic Clear single-ply resonant heads, while the kick sported a Force 1 damped clear batter head and a Force 2 smooth white resonant head with no hole.

Removing the heads revealed bearing edges that were consistently smooth, clean, and relatively sharp—though not the "knife edge" found on certain modern high-end drums. Additionally, the edges had a significant "round-over" counter-cut, which moves the contact spot in from the collar of the head as well as potentially warming up the sound of the drum.

The Set-Up

As far as assembly is concerned, the only unconventional aspects of this kit involve un-nesting the drums and assembling the Egg Basket base. The Stay-Tuned collars are easily detached from the kick and large tom, and can be just as quickly replaced once the other drums are removed. After I attached the base to the twin risers, and fit the bass drum into the basket and tightened the thumbscrews holding it there, the rest of the set-up process was fairly standard.

On the right riser I hung the large tom, and I also attached a cymbal boom arm. Onto the left riser went the small tom, another cymbal boom arm, and the snare. A wooden pedal plate attached to the Egg Basket gave the kick pedal something to clamp onto, and positioned the beater to hit near the middle of the batter head.

Setting up a Nesting Penguin kit for the first time takes a little while, just to get everything positioned and to install the memory locks. But once that's accomplished, subsequent set-ups are quick and easy.

The Sound

All things considered, the little Nesting Penguin bass drum put out a surprisingly big, warm tone. "All things considered" includes not only the dimensions, but also the fact that this is probably the lightest kick drum I've ever played, at only 10 lbs. (I have snare drums that weigh more than that.) The absence of weight isn't only due to the small size, but also to the design. Remember: no lugs, no legs, no mounts, and a thin (1/8") 3-ply birch shell.

The Whitney kick had a solid thud and good, round sustain. No 16x18 drum is going to move the same amount of air as a 20x24, but this little kick really did generate respectable volume. The choice of heads undoubtedly helped here, but I think the real hero was Whitney's very thin, resonant shell, made possible by their collar design.

The same 3-ply shell that gave the kick a round sound was also a factor in warming up the 5x13 snare. The bearing edge design, along with the wood hoops, combined with the shell to create a drum with a nice "woody" character to the sound, even when the drum was tuned to a relatively high tension. It had good sensitivity and projection, but not the rip-your-face-off "crack" you get from snare drums with thicker shells, sharply pointed edges, and heavy die-cast hoops. However, it was a good tonal match for the rest of the kit, and it would be very useful for the types of music you'd likely play with a drumset of this size.

This 6x10 additional snare drum had a big sound for its size.

The little 6x10 snare that we were also sent had a great snap when cranked up to a drum 'n' bass pitch. Yet it retained the woody character of its bigger brother. It also sounded good at lower tensions, which isn't always the case with drums this size. The thin shell and increased internal volume of the Penguin "fat in the middle" design made the little snare sound bigger than it was.

The toms likewise had a bigger sound than you would expect from small, shallow drums. Achieving their optimum tonal output required some attention to the tuning, since wood hoops require a bit more precision in tensioning as compared to stiffer/heavier flanged or die-cast metal hoops. But it was certainly worth the effort, as once again the Penguin drum design lent itself to a warm, musical personality.

The overall projection of the toms was in keeping with the rest of the set: good, but not as blatantly loud as you'd get with deeper, thicker-shelled, metal-hooped (read: bigger and heavier) drums. However, if that's all you're looking for, then you're missing the point of this nifty little drumset.

Conclusion

The Nesting Penguin kit is designed to fulfill a host of practical functions:

1. Pack into as small, light, and portable a package as possible.
2. Assemble easily and quickly at the gig.
3. Take up as small a footprint as possible.
4. Have virtually the entire kit on one stand so you can easily make onstage adjustments if required.

If the Nesting Penguin kit just did all of this, it would be pretty remarkable. But when a kit has all of the above attributes, and sounds very musical, and is custom-built with attention to detail, *and* looks very nice, then you've really got something. The Whitney Nesting Penguin drumset *is* really something.

THE NUMBERS

Configuration: 16x18 bass drum and 9x14 tom (each with "Stay-Tuned" opening resonant head), 7x10 tom, 5x13 snare, "Egg Basket" stand for all drums and two cymbals, padded bags for nesting drums, hard case for bass drum, and padded gig bag for hardware.

List price with all wood hoops, as tested **$1,999**
Same kit with standard metal hoops **$1,849**
6x10 snare with flanged hoops, as tested ..... **$ 285**

(805) 452-4163, www.whitneydrums.com.

"MY DW DRUMS POSSESS STRENGTH AND ELEGANT SOPHISTICATION"

- SHEILA E.

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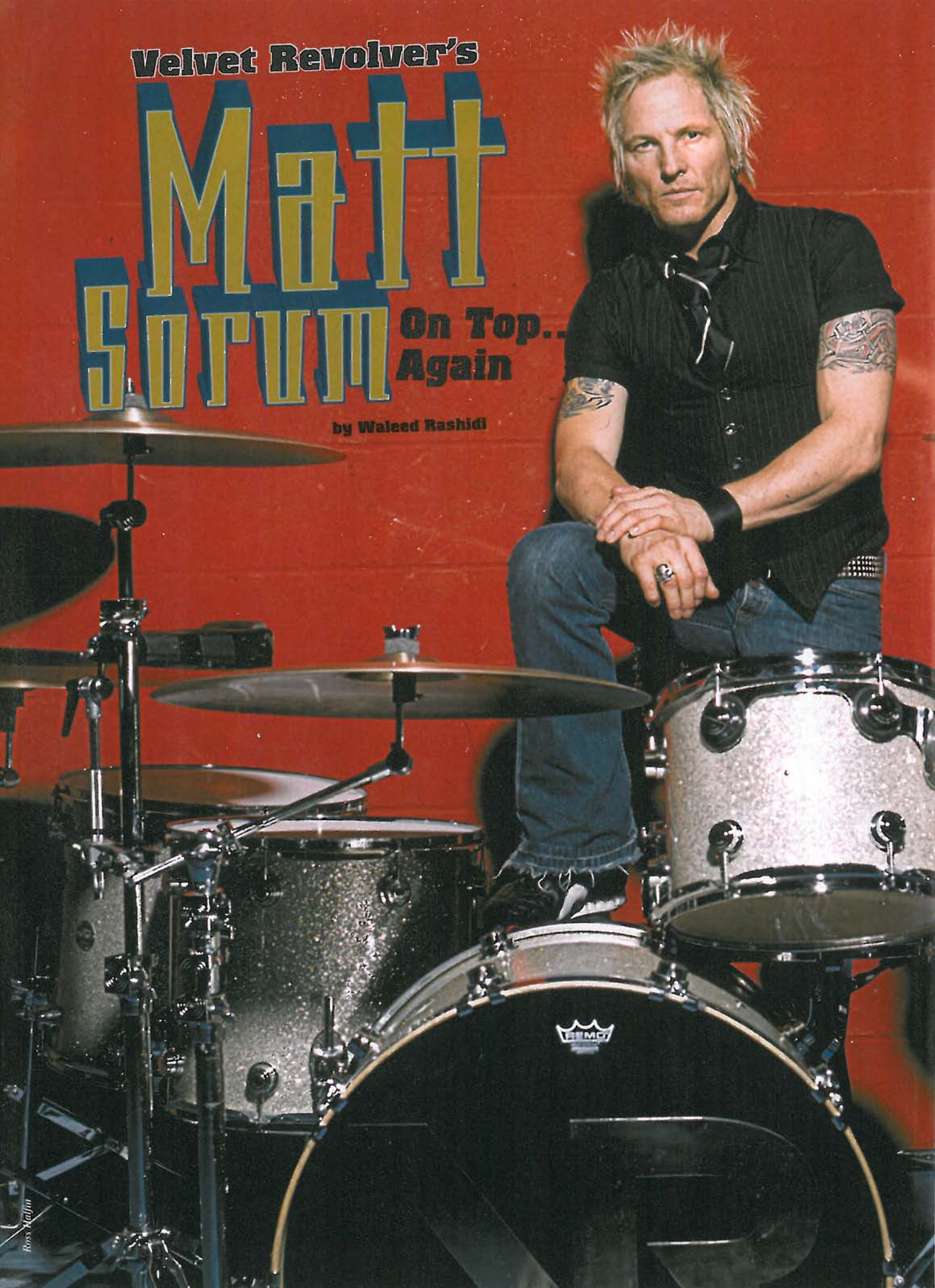
Velvet Revolver's Matt Sorum On Top... Again

by Waleed Rashidi



Ross Halfin

Ross Halfin

Ross Halfin

Ross Halfin

If there's one thing the modern music industry isn't, it's consistent. Changes in tastes and preferences occur seemingly overnight, particularly with the increasingly fickle and exacting audiences of rock music. However, there are a few truly talented musicians who have been able to span generations of rock fans and maintain lengthy careers. Matt Sorum is one of these musicians. His totally pro, solid, powerful, and larger-than-life drumming style has now driven *three* bands to the top of the rock world.

Currently known for his work with Velvet Revolver, the former Guns N' Roses and Cult star has proven time and again that he's able to excite an audience in *any* situation he finds himself. Since his first brush with fame in The Cult, the British band whose guitar-fueled rock fury dominated Stateside charts in the late '80s, the California-born Sorum has charged his way through the upper echelon of rock's ranks. He landed the coveted Guns N' Roses gig and performed on the band's wildly popular double-album sets, *Use Your Illusion, Vols. I & II.* After years of international touring with one of the world's most popular rock bands, Sorum eventually exited GNR to begin a new adventure as a producer, film composer, and solo artist. (Check out his recent solo effort, *Hollywood Zen.*)

However, opportunity knocked once more during a 2002 tribute concert for for-

Ross Halfin

mer Ozzy Osbourne drummer Randy Castillo, who had passed away from cancer. At the show, Sorum regrouped with former Guns bandmates Slash and Duff McKagan. It was there that the three decided to put a new project together. After nine months of rehearsals and auditions, the threesome—along with guitarist Dave Kushner—recruited former Stone Temple Pilots vocalist Scott Weiland, and Velvet Revolver was born.

Immediately, Sorum was busy with the new project, initially working on a couple of film soundtracks. The first was for *The Italian Job*, for which Velvet Revolver did a cover of Pink Floyd's "Money." "That was really interesting to tackle," says Sorum, "because it's in seven. There's not a lot you can do with the beat because the bass line is so predominant. But we kicked it up a couple of notches and rocked it a little harder. That was the first track we did with Scott, and it went really well."

Next, Velvet Revolver was commissioned to create a cut for *The Hulk*. According to Matt, "It's based on a riff that I wrote, which ended up becoming a song called 'Set Me Free.'"

The track got on the Internet, radio stations picked it up, and all of a sudden Velvet Revolver had a hit song—with no promotion and no label. RCA immediately inked the band to a deal, and the fivesome went into the studio with producer Josh Abraham to cut their debut, *Contraband*. "Josh had done a lot of records that we liked," Sorum explains. "We produced the album with him—it was a 50/50 deal. We recorded to tape, I cut the drums in four days, and we finished the record before Christmas." The album entered the charts at number-1 across the board.

A lot has changed in the music world since Sorum last released an album with his former Guns bandmates. But as *Contraband*'s rampant success (and subsequent platinum status) has proved, Matt still has *more* than what it takes to keep himself relevant in the revolving door of rock.

"Even after all these years, when the sound is right, the monitors are rocking, the kick drum's pumping, and I'm feeling inspired, it's still a gas."

Matt Sorum

MD: What makes Velvet Revolver cool, new, and different for you?

Matt: The coolest vibe about this band is that the crowds are a lot younger than I expected. It's almost like people have been starved for real rock 'n' roll, and I think we're one of the few bands offering that now. I'm talking about traditional, straight-up, dangerous rock 'n' roll. And I think that's the most exciting music.

Our tour in America has been sold out. Granted, we've done smaller venues—anywhere from 2,000 to 3,000 seats—but most of the gigs sold out in twenty minutes. Same thing with Europe—we just finished that tour and it was all sell-outs. We played big festivals too, and it was killer.

We do a couple Guns N' Roses and Stone Temple Pilots songs in our set, but the rest is pure Velvet Revolver. We don't want to give people the wrong impression. We don't do "Welcome To The Jungle," for instance. We do more obscure songs.

MD: You guys have been working non-stop since the record came out. What's your daily regimen while on tour?

Matt: We soundcheck every day at around 3:00—if we're not at a festival, as a lot of those are what they call "throw 'n' gos." That's where you just get up there and bang it out, and you've probably got a bad monitor mix to deal with. But on our own gigs, we'll do a soundcheck, and usually we'll take that opportunity to jam a bit. In fact, a lot of songs have been based around grooves I've kicked off at soundcheck. I'll just play a beat, everyone will chime in, and before you know it, it's turned into something.

After soundcheck, we'll sit down backstage and eat together. Getting ready for the gig that night, sometimes I'll just chill for a couple of hours. I also try not to get up too early in the day. If I'm going on stage at 10:00 P.M., I don't want to be up at 8:00 A.M. I try to get up around noon and go to the gym of whatever hotel we're staying at. But I don't work out too hard on performance days. On days off, I work out a lot harder.

I have to pace myself, because Velvet Revolver is the most aggressive band I've ever been in. Drumming-wise, it's the hardest I've ever played, way harder than Guns N' Roses, way harder than The Cult. And listening back to the album, I'm playing fairly aggressively. Maybe I should have come up with some slower grooves with this band so I could relax—at least for a couple of songs. [laughs] The set's pretty high-energy.

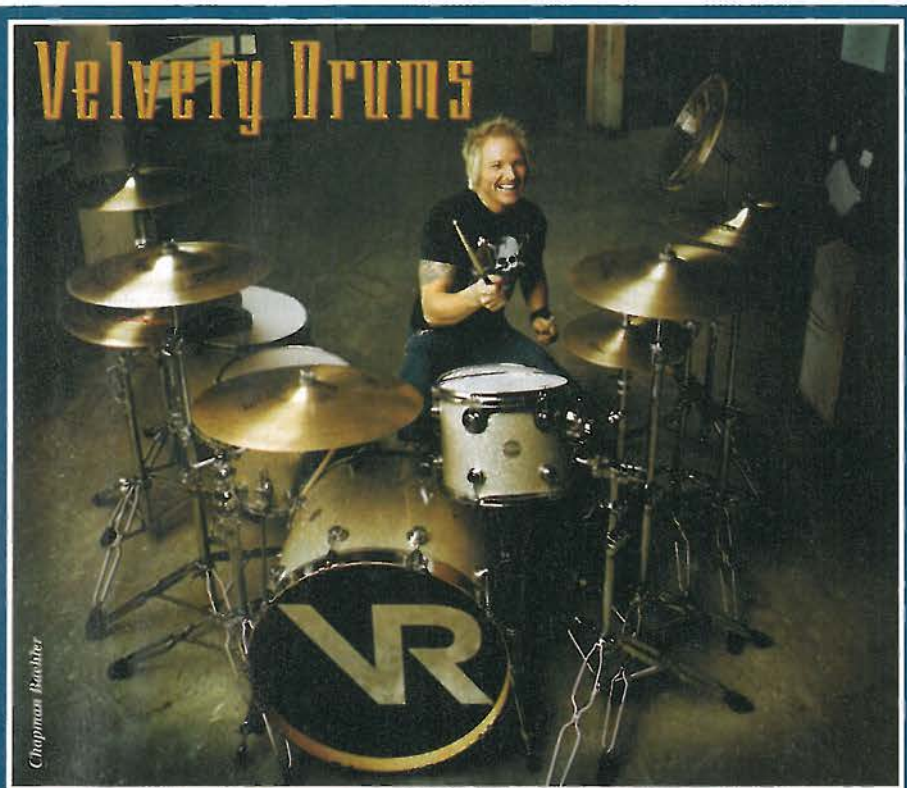
MD: With all of this heavy playing, do you have a warm-up routine before hitting the stage?

Matt: I've never been big about warming up. I don't sit backstage and play on a pad or anything. But I do like to stretch. I'm really into yoga. I find that when I stretch my legs before I go on stage, my back gets a lot of relief, and that's important.

I know a lot of drummers with back problems. There's one chiropractor in the Valley who takes care of a lot of guys. One day I was in the waiting room sitting next to Terry Bozzio and Vinnie Colaiuta. I said, "What's wrong with you guys?" And they said, "The old five vertebrae," the lower back. It's caused by a lot of leaning over and lifting your kit incorrectly. It's that weird lean that we drummers do, like when I'm talking to the band and I lean forward and rest on the snare drum.

MD: But your posture is excellent when you play. You seem to be very upright.

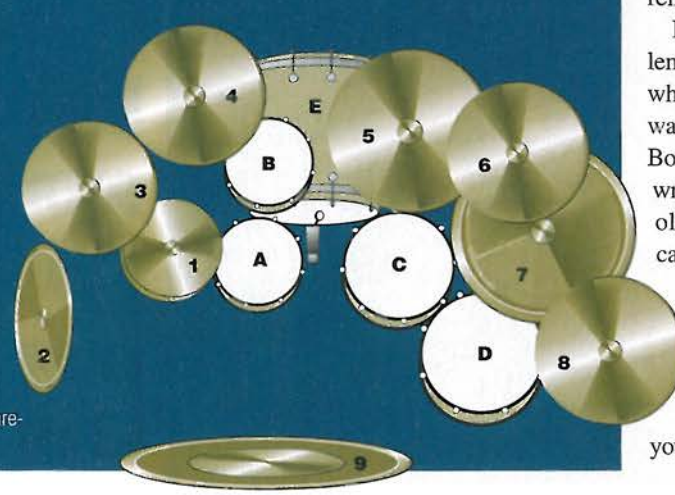
Velvety Drums



Drums: Drum Workshop in silver sparkle glass finish
A. 6½x14 snare drum (DW copper or Ludwig Black Beauty)
B. 10x13 tom
C. 14x16 floor tom
D. 16x18 floor tom
E. 18x24 bass drum

Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 14" New Beat hi-hats
2. 18" Oriental China Trash
3. 19" A medium-thin crash
4. 18" A medium-thin crash
5. 22" Rock ride
6. 19" A medium-thin crash
7. 22" Oriental China Trash
8. 20" A medium-thin crash
9. 40" gong

Hardware: DW 9000 series, including kick pedal with felt beater (medium spring tension)
Heads: Remo Emperor X on snare batter (with half slice of Moon Gel for muffling), clear Ambassador snare-side, coated Emperor on tom batters with clear Ambassadors on bottoms, clear PowerStroke 3 on bass drum batter with Ebony Ambassador on front (DW pillow inside for muffling)
Sticks: Zildjian Matt Sorum model (hickory with wood tip), Ahead Stick Wrap



Matt: I try to focus on that. When I was playing early on, I used to have my drums positioned a lot higher. But then I thought, God, nobody can see me! I wanted people to leave the show and say, "Hey, I recognize the drummer." So I started to lower my kit. I think that ended up helping my back.

All of my drums are very easy to get to. My floor tom and snare are perfectly horizontal, so they're not lower than I am. When I put my arms out, everything's right there. When I go to the cymbals, my arms are raised but not too high. All of the drums on my kit are placed where my arms fall, with the exception of my rack tom. That seems to work best for me.

MD: How else has your kit changed over the years?

Matt: When I first joined The Cult, I used to play a big kit with three rack toms, two floors, and a lot more cymbals, with two China cymbals up high like Terry Bozzio. That was a big thing for drummers in the '80s. Big kits were in. Before I joined The Cult, I even played a double kick setup. But I only played two bass drums because I lost an audition to Gregg Bissonette for the David Lee Roth gig.

MD: What was that about?

Matt: They were looking for a guy who could play double bass, and I didn't play it at the time. I was always a single kick player. I mean, I loved Keith Moon, but I was always more about John Bonham, Bill Ward, and Ian Paice. I lost that audition, so it motivated me to learn how to play two bass drums. And then, when I got in The Cult, they didn't like double kick. They said, "What's this other bass drum?" So I went back to single kick. A little later on I started using a double pedal, though I don't use one now.

My setup changed back in '89. I was in the middle of The Cult's *Sonic Temple* tour, and I said to my drum tech, "You know, I want to play a more traditional setup. Let's get rid of some of the toms and scale back. Oh, and I want to set it up like that *tonight*." We were playing in front of 20,000 people. But you know what? Changing the kit around was very inspiring. I was getting bored with the big setup. I went to the more traditional, Bonham setup, with one rack tom. I was able to position my ride cymbal a bit lower, and it was very comfortable. It caused me to play differently. I was more about the groove and wasn't filling things up as much.

MD: Speaking of groove, your feel on the new Velvet Revolver disc has a rounder, fatter vibe to it than when you were with Guns N' Roses. There's more of a "swing" to your playing.

Matt: I think so, too. I mean, it's funny, when I played with The Cult, it was much more of a swing band, and I tried to bring that back. It's difficult when you play with certain musicians that like to push the time forward. A lot of times I'll fight with musicians about the tempo. A change as subtle as two bpm can really change the feel of a song.

On *Contraband*, I argued on about four songs that I felt were just a little too fast. To me, some of those songs are a lot fatter played just a bit slower—in particular, "Do It For The Kids," the second track. I didn't play that song to a click; I played it live. Originally it was two or three bpm slower, and it had a much slinkier, sexier feel. Listen to Bonham, man. He was so far on the backside.

Slash likes to play a bit on top, and Duff's on the beat, so it's all kind of interconnected. If you listen to Rage Against The Machine or Audioslave, those guys are so much about the groove. It's awesome. Our feel tends to be a little punkier. But I think live, we're beginning to sit back on it a little bit and make it feel fat.

MD: You sound as if you're very opinionated about tempo.

Matt: Oh yeah. I think drummers have an innate sense of where we feel the tempo should be. That's what we're supposed to do. That's why we're the guys laying it down. And I'll argue about it. I'll say, "Man, I'm telling you, that's the best tempo. Listen to the vocals." The vocals are the key to picking the right tempo.

MD: Do you record to a click?

Slash On Matt

Saul Hudson, aka Slash, wailed onto the music scene in 1987 with Guns N' Roses. With his top hat, long curly hair, and dangling cigarette, Slash became an instant six-string god. *MD* spoke to the blazing guitarist about Matt Sorum, his former drummer in GNR and his *current* drummer in Velvet Revolver.

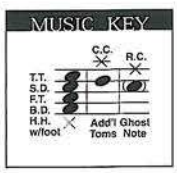
"Years ago I went to see The Cult at the Universal Amphitheater, and I was in awe of Matt," Slash says. "I thought he was the heaviest rock 'n' roll drummer I'd ever seen. And now, after having worked with him quite a bit, I've learned that Matt is one of those guys who has it all. You know, all of the subtleties that make it dramatic. Plus he hits so hard and plays with such energy and dominance that it blows me away.

"I keep Matt's drums completely cranked in my sidefills, because what he plays is so inspiring. And feelwise...well...Matt's got a *great* feel. If I come up with a riff and it clicks with him and he locks in, I *know* we have a song. For me, Matt's the ultimate rock 'n' roll drummer."

For more with Slash, go to www.moderndrummer.com.

Billy Amendola

Ross Halfin



Velvet Revolver's Matt Sorum Contraband

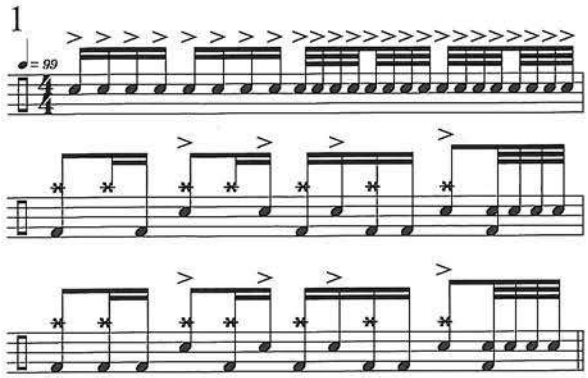
by Ed Breckenfeld

America's newest supergroup is off and running with their much-anticipated album, *Contraband*. Combining the best attributes of each member's previous band (Guns N' Roses and Stone Temple Pilots), Velvet Revolver produces a slew of radio-friendly rock hits. Throughout the disc, Matt Sorum delivers a performance that's as slammin' as ever. Let's check out a few of his drum parts.

"Illegal I Song"

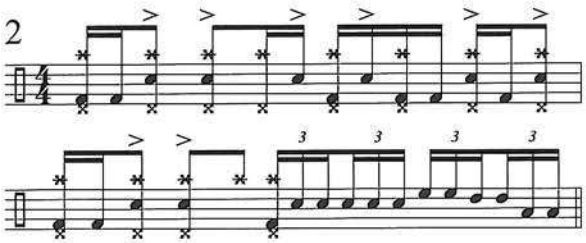
Here's a great "in your face" intro from this rocking track. (0:00)

1



The song's chorus builds on the drum beat from the verse, releasing into a driving 16th-note-triplet fill. (0:46)

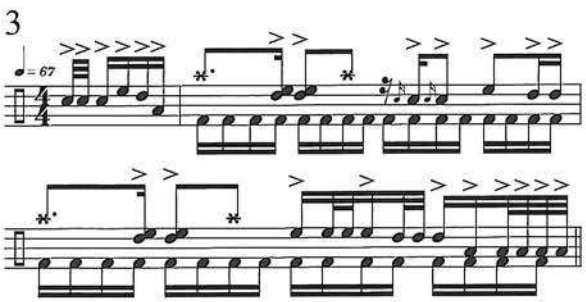
2



"Fall To Pieces"

Matt's entrance on the pre-chorus of this hit single is a textbook example of how to energize a power ballad. (0:42)

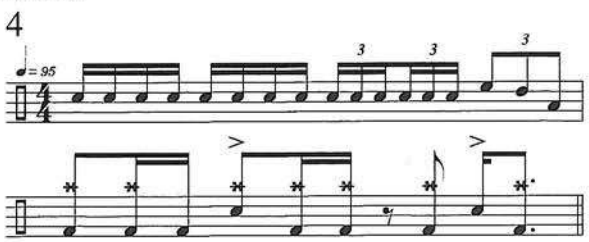
3



"Headspace"

The playful rhythmic shifts in Sorum's fills add interest throughout the album. (0:08)

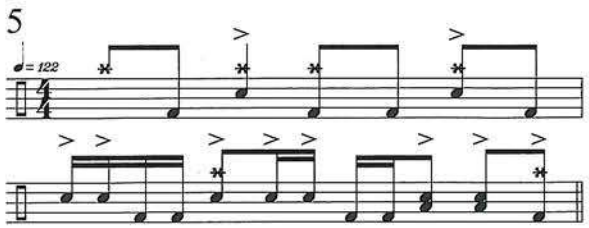
4



"Superhuman"

Here's a classic kick/snare lick that works perfectly as a setup for an off-beat crash. (3:50)

5



"You Got No Right"

Matt blends his bass drum nicely into this fill near the end of the track. (4:42)

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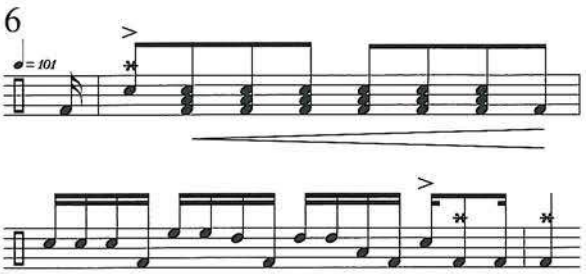
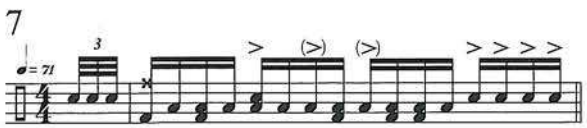


"Slither"

The album's first single opens with this menacing 16th-note tom groove. The four snare hits at the end of the measure act as a counterpoint to the heaviness of the toms and kick drum. (0:00)

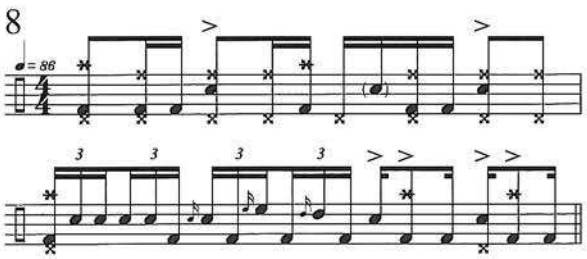
7



"Dirty Little Thing"

Here's another great fill that relies as much on the bass drum as it does on the snare and toms. (3:31)

8



You can contact Ed Breckenfeld at www.edbreckenfeld.com.

Matt: Usually I do, but it depends. For instance, I cut "Big Machine" to a click, and I think that song *swings*. Some of the faster ones do as well, like "Spectacle." Cutting that tune, I was more comfortable than I've ever been recording with a click. It just drove me through the song. I got that one on the first take.

MD: What's your philosophy behind inserting the right drum fill?

Matt: I've always been very big on finding the right opening fill for a tune. If it's your job to open the song, make sure you come up with something that people hear and go, "Oh my God, yeah!" Like when I did "You Could Be Mine." I came up with that at the very end of the process, right before the recording started, and it was kind of a joke. It was basically a slowed-down sort of Terry Bozzio thing, which I just switched up. I added it to this sort of punk-rock rolling tom thing, and everybody got all excited about it. People always ask me about that fill.

On the other end of the spectrum, a lot of drummers gave me grief about the fill I played on "November Rain," where I repeated that one tom fill a few times. Axl [Rose] and I were sitting in the recording studio listening to Elton John's 'Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me,' and there's a fill that Nigel Olsson played on it. Axl said, "Do that fill every time we come around to the chorus. Give me that same fill, and we'll make the toms sound huge!" I was like, all right, I can do that. I repeated that basic fill, and it became a part of the song.

With Velvet Revolver, I like the opening to "Sucker Train Blues." On the opening of "Illegal I Song," I basically do a single-stroke roll, which was fun. I have a couple of other similar fills in that song.

MD: You always seem to pick your spots very well.

Matt: I try to stay out of the way of the vocals. That's my main thing. Of course, there are certain little lyrical things that you can pick up on and play off of, but you have to be careful about that. In general, I like to set up sections with fills, and that's about it. And it doesn't have to be some long thing. Two well-placed hits can say a lot.

On a song like "Slither," I do little open hi-hat things in the verses. It's subtle, and I like it. I was listening to Ian Paice on a Deep Purple record called *Burn*, and he just had the coolest way of throwing in these little open, sneaky-peak hi-hat parts. That type of thing adds to a track.

MD: What's your approach to the hi-hat in general?

Matt: I used to approach it with a big, open, splashy concept. But now I'm playing it tighter, and I think that approach—that really tight 8th-note vibe—has come back. Open hi-hat was a big thing in the '90s.

MD: It also seems as if you've started to use the washy-ness of your ride a lot more lately to help fill in your grooves.

Matt: It's funny you mention that, because I haven't played the ride like that until recently. That whole crashy, washing-through-the-track approach really became popular when Dave Grohl did it with Nirvana. I think that brought back the crash/ride thing that guys like Keith Moon and Bill Ward started. Somewhere around the '80s, guys started playing their bell more, like Steve Smith in Journey. I used to keep my ride really tight and I was always on the bell, never really going for that washy sound.

MD: But you were also using bigger rides.

Matt: I used a really big ride with Guns—a 24". So I really couldn't do that crash/ride thing on it. But now my ride is a 22", which I can wash on. And if the tune is really heavy, let's say in a chorus, I'll ride on my 19" crash, which is right above my ride. I get a nice-sounding crash/ride with it.

MD: And what about your sticks? Has your choice changed?

Matt: I'm playing the Zildjian Super 5B model at the moment. It feels great. The stick that I have out, the Matt Sorum model, is a little heavier and more of a live stick. I used to play a *much* bigger stick. But as I've gotten a little older, a lighter stick just seems to feel right.

I don't know if I'm playing as hard as I used to, or if I'm just playing more defined. I think I'm probably still hitting as hard—maybe an iota less. I'm going more for tone now. There's a point where you can hit a drum too hard, where it chokes the sound. The great drummers get a much bigger sound playing a little lighter, because they understand this.

MD: After so many years of performing, you must feel very comfortable on stage.

Matt: Some nights I'm up there and it feels like it's on automatic pilot. It's almost as if the whole thing's going down without me. It just feels so good. I can't explain it. Even after all these years, when the sound is right, the monitors are rocking, the kick drum's pumping, and I'm feeling inspired, it's still a gas.

MD: What do you look for in your monitor mix?

Matt: The drums have to be blazin'. I was using in-ear monitors on the recent tour I did with The Cult, which was cool for that band because it was more of a straight-up groove thing. Velvet Revolver is a bit rowdier, and I felt a little tied down with the in-ears. I didn't feel like I had enough movement. I've got a really killer rig now, with big subs behind me. It's a nice sound, but not over the top volume-wise. It's not painful. I basically have the stage set up in full stereo.

MD: How do you come up with some of your parts? You mentioned "Illegal I Song" earlier. It's pretty funky and busy. You play a lot of rolls and ghost strokes on the snare in the verses. The bell pattern in the choruses is also cool.

Matt: Yeah, I'm playing that bell pattern while moving off the rack tom. That came naturally for that section. I felt it and liked it. Something was happening in the guitars, and I remember I just started doing that kind of disco beat.

The snare rolls were actually inspired by Duff. He sat down at the kit and played

something similar. I'm really lucky to have that, because sometimes when I'm not inspired, I'll pick up the bass and he'll get on the drums, and I'll get a completely different perspective.

MD: You have a reputation of being a big fan of snare drums, using several in the studio. What snare are you currently using on stage?

Matt: DW made a really cool copper snare for me that sounds bitchin'. I switch between that and a Ludwig Black Beauty. Back when I did the *Use Your Illusion* albums, I used a different snare on every track, because I was into that at the time.

MD: How important is jamming and improvisation to you?

Matt: I love to jam. I think I've been able to work in a lot of different bands because I've been able to jam and pick things up quickly. And I think that comes from listening. My best advice to any drummer would be to listen carefully to the guys you're playing with. Focus on what *they're* doing, and work from there. And be sensitive to dynamics, but still drive the band.

MD: Can you offer any advice to drummers on how to become a great player?

Matt: I think if you want to be one of the greats, you have to research the greats. Go back and check out Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Louie Bellson, Max Roach, Bernard Purdie, Ringo Starr, Ginger Baker, Ian Paice—there are so many. Of course, you have to listen to the great stuff that's out today as well—Refused, Primal Scream, Queens Of The Stone Age. Dave Grohl's drumming on the Queens disc is inspiring. I listen to all kinds of music, and I keep my ears open.

MD: What else should drummers think about to help their careers?

Matt: There's a lot more that goes into being in a band than just playing great drums. I think your personality is important. Don't be too sure of yourself, and make sure you can roll with the punches.

You also have to bring a good attitude to a band. It's important that other musicians want to hang out with you. How many bands have you been in where you hate the other guys? It's like, Why do I want to be in a band with them? I try to stay positive and bring a good vibe to the situation.

MD: You've been able to change and adapt to many situations throughout your career.

Matt: You do it out of necessity. You think, I'm going to do the best possible thing that I can for this gig and represent this band the best I can. I may have to make some subtle changes in my playing to make that happen, but that's what I'm going to do.

When I was with The Cult, I didn't get to play half as much as I do with Velvet Revolver. That band was all about the groove. But what's wrong with that? I love AC/DC and I love to play that kind of stuff. Why not? If the song's bitchin', it feels good. So I just make those subtle changes and try to bring what's right to each situation. And right now, with Velvet Revolver, this is a band that I'm an original member of, so I'm able to bring something of my own to the table. That feels very good.

MD Radio — To hear Matt Sorum and Velvet Revolver, tune in to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

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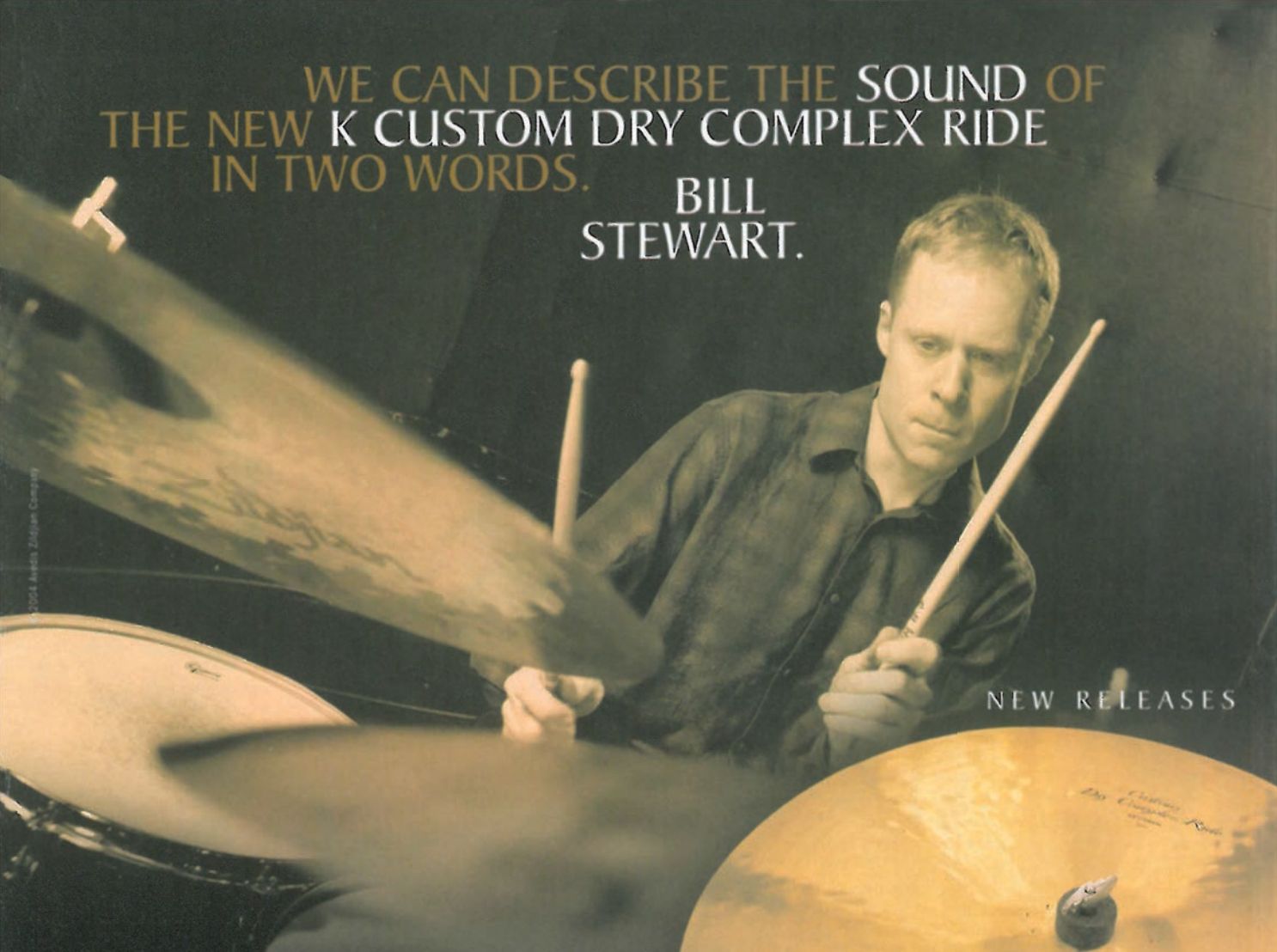

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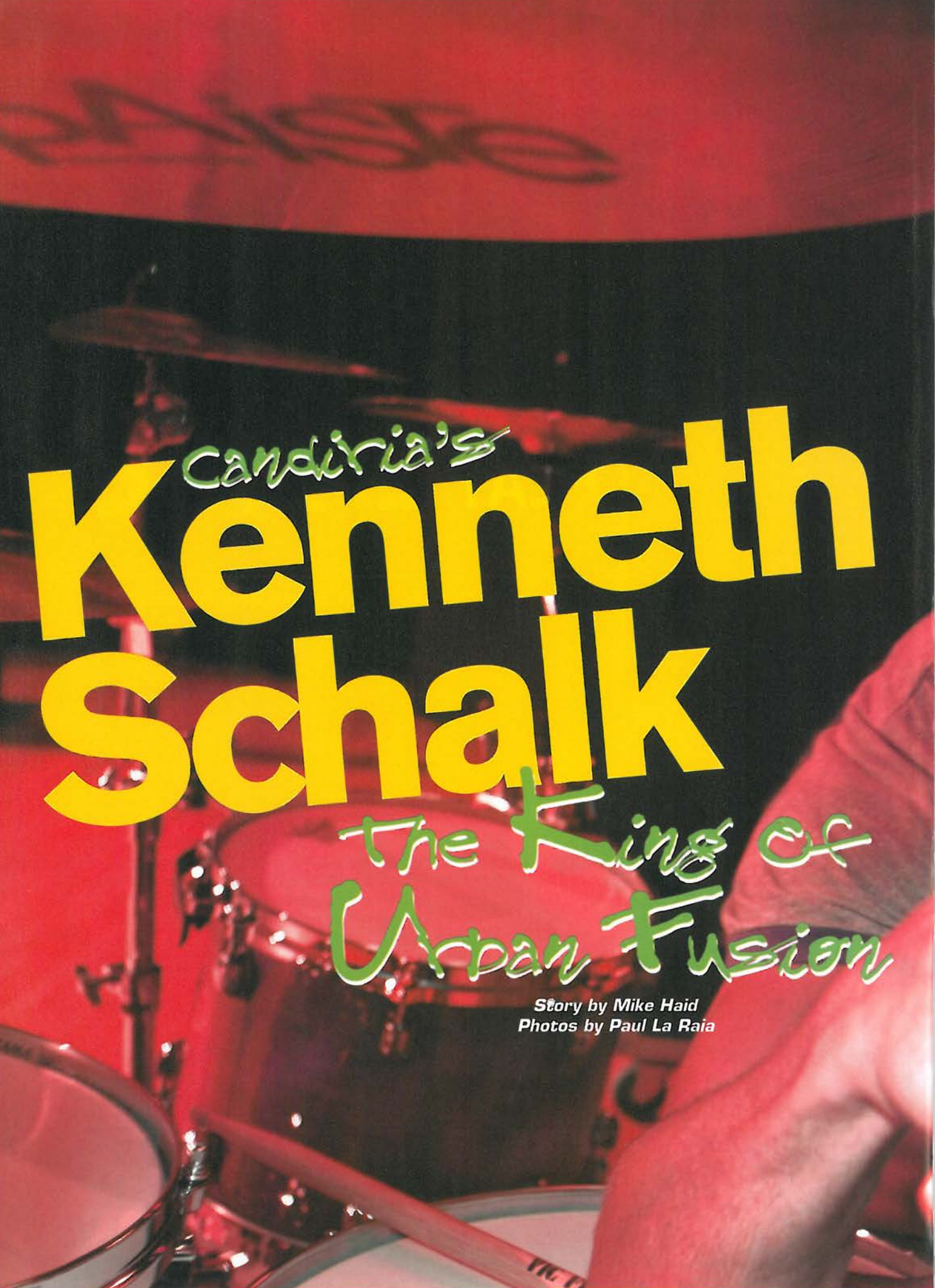
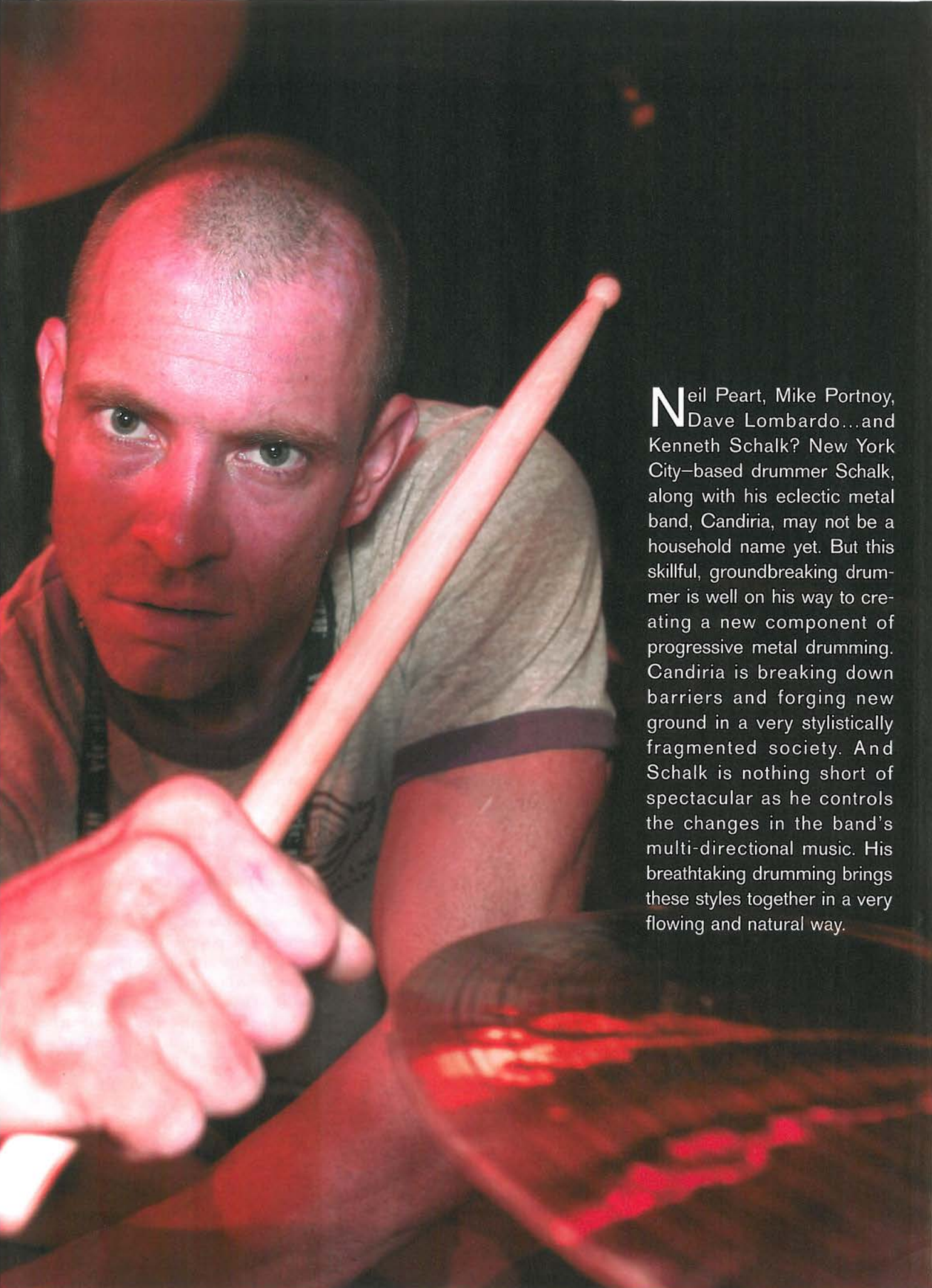


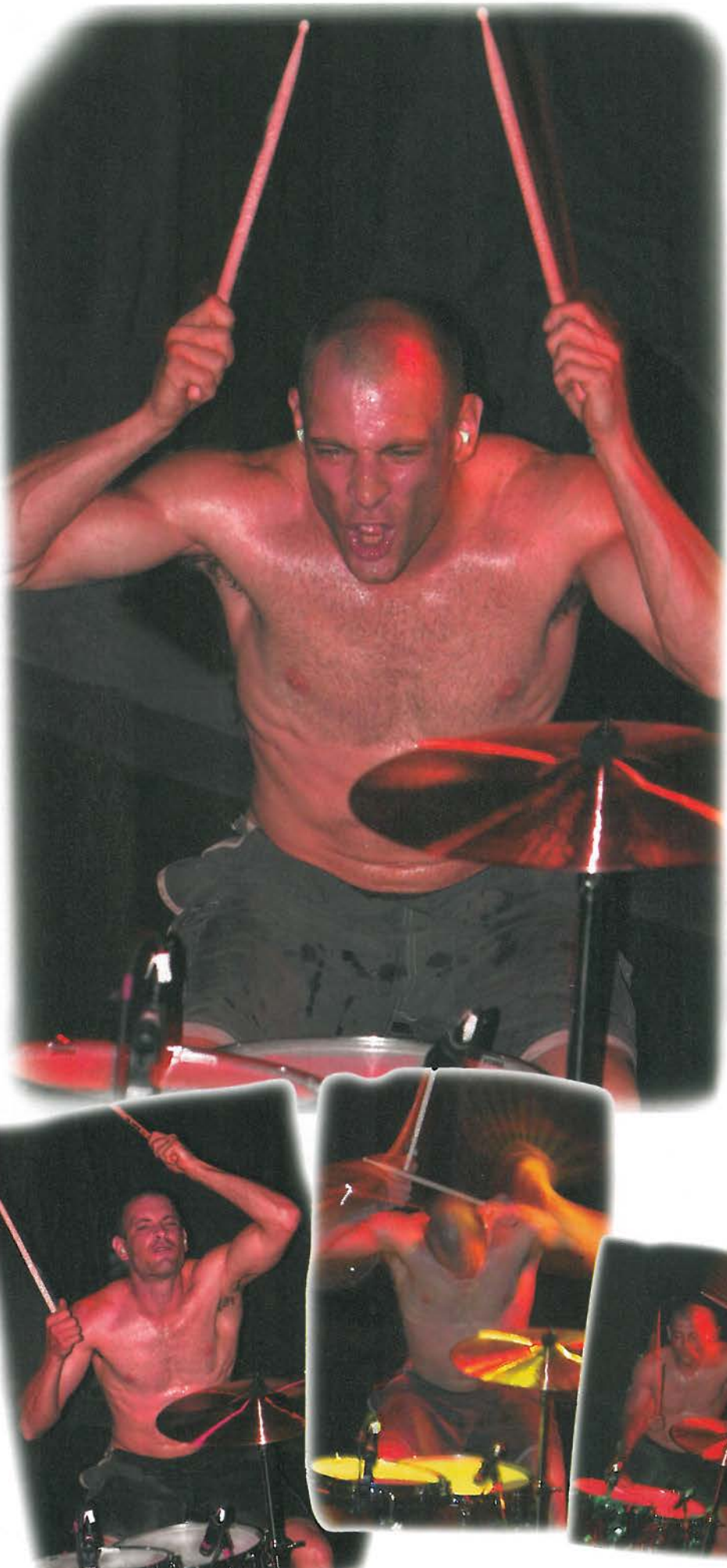
Candiria's Kenneth Schalk

The King of Urban Fusion

Story by Mike Haid
Photos by Paul La Raia



Neil Peart, Mike Portnoy, Dave Lombardo...and Kenneth Schalk? New York City–based drummer Schalk, along with his eclectic metal band, Candiria, may not be a household name yet. But this skillful, groundbreaking drummer is well on his way to creating a new component of progressive metal drumming. Candiria is breaking down barriers and forging new ground in a very stylistically fragmented society. And Schalk is nothing short of spectacular as he controls the changes in the band's multi-directional music. His breathtaking drumming brings these styles together in a very flowing and natural way.



Schalk and bandmates label their music "urban fusion." The music is a diverse blend of rock, jazz, funk, reggae, rap, and progressive metal, all combined with angry, sometimes growling lyrics of significant social commentary. "It wasn't that we intentionally tried to mix all of these styles," Schalk says. "The fact that our influences were so broad allowed us to put them together in a way that felt natural to us."

The band's new release, *What Doesn't Kill You...*, reflects the anger, determination, and fearlessness that has arisen from the devastation of the 9/11 attacks on their home turf, as well as the band's survival of its own near fatal incident. On September 9, 2002, Candiria was involved in a disastrous car wreck that almost took the lives of several members, including Schalk. Today, with perseverance, resolve, and successful rehabilitation, the band is back stronger than ever.

Schalk possesses the versatility and advanced techniques that today's top metal drummers are made of, including insane double bass chops and an ability to create powerful and interesting ideas within odd meters. But Schalk's chops and musicality go far beyond mere double bass licks. He's a well-rounded player with lots of technique and musical depth. He's also a multi-instrumentalist and songwriter, and he's involved in graphic design and advertising as well. In fact, the drummer designed the artwork for the band's new CD.

Schalk plays a small kit with few cymbals. He performs wearing only shorts and sneakers, exposing his athletic, boxer-like frame and shaved head. His forceful playing style shows little finesse, but the intricate patterns he weaves into Candiria's music give his drumming a presence similar to what drum heroes like Peart, Portnoy, and Lombardo have.

Strip away all the drums, the arsenal of cymbals, and the elaborate staging, and what you're left with is the power of the music and the attitude of the musician behind the kit. This is where Kenneth Schalk is building his reputation as a player deserving wide recognition. If Dream Theater took the progressive metal torch from Rush, then Candiria is now lighting the way for a whole *new* evolution of progressive metal. There is an undeniable force of originality with Candiria, and with Schalk at the helm, they will continue to grow.

Schalk's Set

Drums: Tama Starclassic maple in Royal Walnut finish
A. 5½x14 snare drum
B. 8x10 tom
C. 10x14 tom
D. 18x22 kick

Cymbals: Paiste
1. 14" hi-hats (Signature Dark Crisp bottom for top hat, Signature Sound Edge bottom)
2. 18" Signature Power crash
3. 22" Signature Full ride
4. 18" Rude crash-ride
5. 18" Signature Heavy China

Hardware: Tama Titan series, Power Glide hi-hat stand, Iron Cobra double pedal, First Chair throne (round)
Heads: Remo coated Emperor X on snare and tom batters, Ambassador snare-side, clear Pinstripes on bottoms of toms, clear PowerStroke 3 on bass drum
Sticks: Vic Firth American Hickory Metal model
Footwear: $10 Wal-Mart hook-and-loop fastener running sneakers

MD: Does the music scene in New York accept Candiria's radical combination of styles?

Kenneth: The metal scene has been expanding and evolving over the years because of the diversity of styles the city offers. We started in 1992 as a death metal band with guys from hardcore and rap environments. I was coming from a jazz and funk background. So when we brought our influences together, our songwriting became something more than typical death metal.

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now we've developed an original sound with lots of influences that include structured songs with melodic vocals. But growing up in a city like New York, with its musical diversity, if you're open-minded as a musician, there's almost no way to avoid being influenced by all sorts of music.

MD: Can you talk about the near fatal auto accident that the band survived?

Kenneth: We were just starting our first week on tour. We knew that our van had some problems, but it seemed to be holding up well enough to hit the road. In the middle of the night, I pulled over to have another driver take over. As I started to fall asleep, he woke me up to tell me that the van was slowing down. Not being mechanically inclined, we suspected that the transmission was going or something like that. So we decided to just turn on the hazard lights and slow down so we could get to the next gig. We figured we would have the van worked on when we arrived.

At about 9:00 A.M., we were twenty miles from Buffalo, on our way to Cleveland, and we were rear-ended by a tractor-trailer. The tractor-trailer jackknifed and smashed into the van, and we rolled several times before stopping. Several guys got thrown out of the van, and I woke up next to the van with my head bleeding. I was pretty coherent, so I tried to stand up. That's when I realized that my right knee was totally messed up. Later I found out that I had a torn ACL and my MCL was all messed up too.

After surgery and rehab, my doctor told me it would only be about a month of downtime before I could start using my leg again to play drums. The doctor and rehab guys were great and gave me some really good exercises to get me back in shape quickly. After recovering, the band started writing again and then began working on the new album.

MD: Your recovery was amazing, and it obviously didn't slow your feet down, because your double bass chops on the new CD are blazing.

Kenneth: I have to give credit to Dave Lombardo and some of the other metal drummers of the '80s for inspiring me to make the transition from speed metal and thrash to death metal and hardcore. Lombardo and Charlie Benante were my heroes when I was a teenager, and they really inspired me to get my speed and double bass chops together.

MD: What is your technical approach to double bass playing?

Kenneth: There are guys out today like Virgil Donati who have wicked double bass chops and great technique, which I admire. However, double bass has always been more of an accent thing for me. I like using it for quick four-stroke ruffs or for an accent before a snare and cymbal pattern.

When I was growing up in the '80s, I played double bass all the time. I also had a

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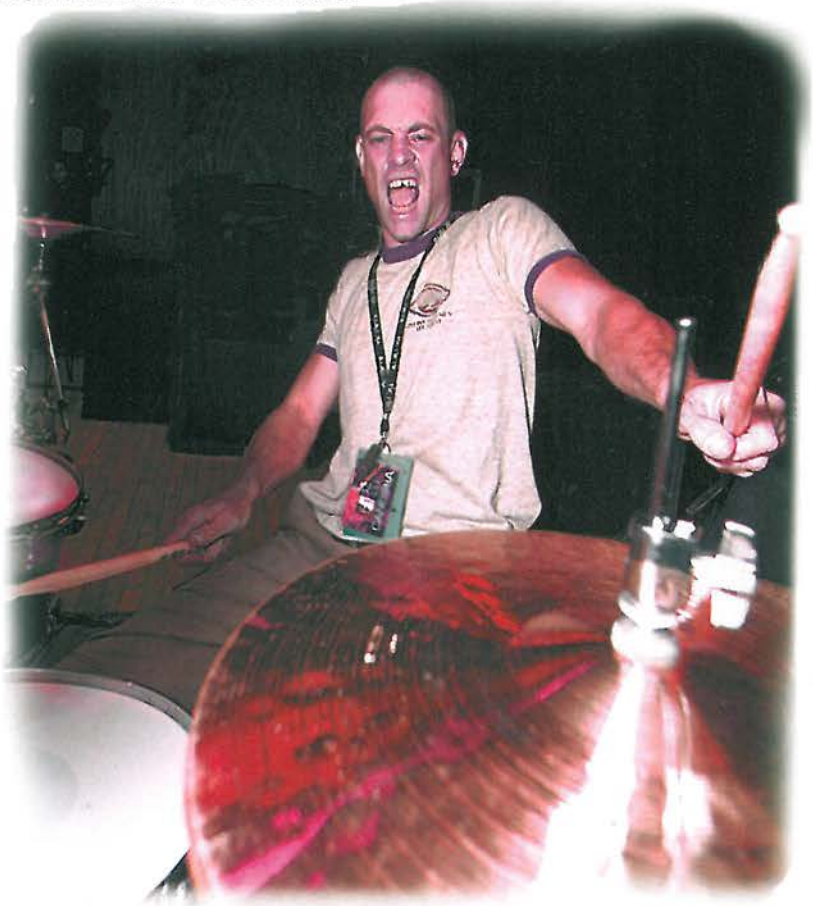
Kenneth Schalk



"I would rather listen to drummers like Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, Elvin Jones, and Art Blakey, players who didn't think like rudimentary marching drummers. They thought like great musicians."

drum teacher who really helped me get my approach together.

MD: What did the teacher work with you on?

Kenneth: First of all, he had me focus on the way I sit, making sure I had great posture so that I can generate energy from my center. Next, you have to make sure that you have a well-balanced setup between your two bass drums, like a triangular design between you and the two pedals. I started out on two bass drums. When I switched to a double pedal, I made sure to set up my pedals in the same position that they were in when I played two bass drums.

Once your posture and setup are correct, choose a moderate tempo setting on the metronome—around 120 bpm—and focus on exercising the proper muscles from the knee down. Make sure that you're getting a good ankle snap and maintain an even balance between your feet. It's best to practice this at least ten to twenty minutes a day. It's important to keep your double bass chops up if you play metal music. You can quickly lose your strength and endurance if you don't work your feet like you work your hands.

MD: You do some quick double bass flurries in the song "Blood" that are very tasty.

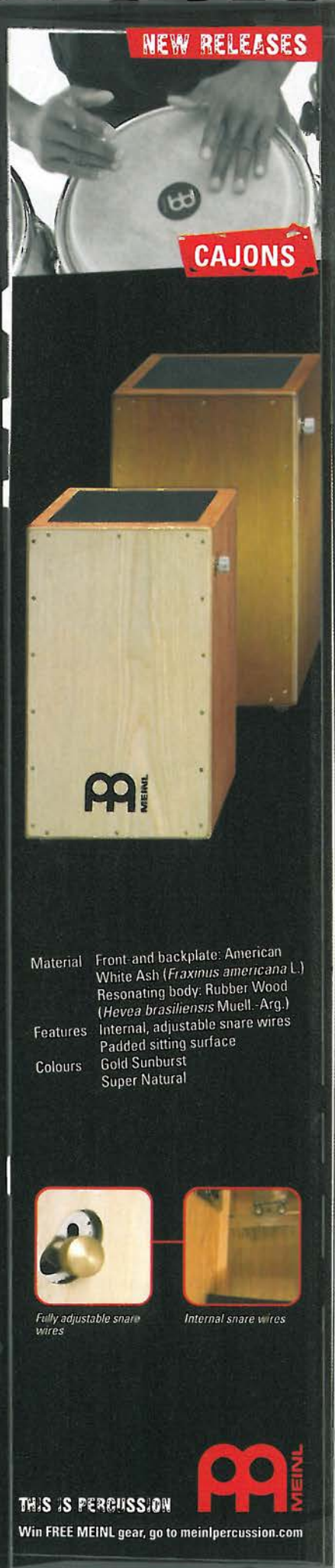
Kenneth: Yeah, those are the four-stroke ruffs that I was talking about.

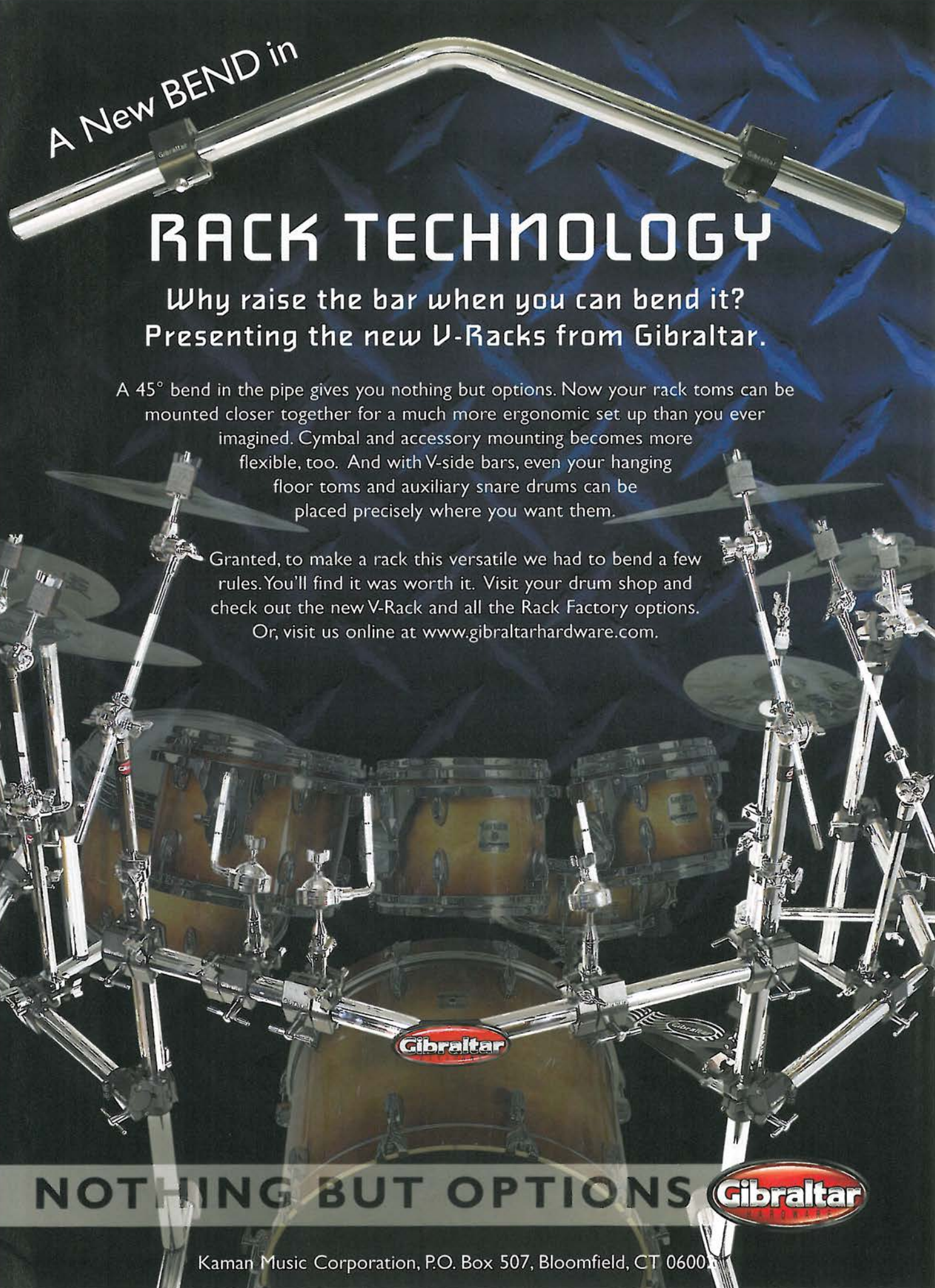
MD: The intro on "1000 Points Of Light" is blazing as well.

Kenneth: That intro is at about 190 bpm.

MD: What are your thoughts on playing to a click?

Kenneth: Every drummer should learn to play to a click. I meet a lot of drummers who aspire to do studio work in New York, and the first thing I tell them is that they have to learn to play to a click. Without that ability you'll never make it. I've been doing studio work for the last ten years, and my ability to

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solid time constantly improves because I focus on the importance of working around the click.

MD: Do you do studio work outside of the band?

Kenneth: Yes, locally in the New York area. There are so many bands and artists making music in the area. They may not be famous, but the money is there and the gigs are happening. It also helps to know people in the business. Since I've been doing session work in the area for so many years, I've built great relationships with a lot of the engineers, and they hook me up with work when I'm available.

MD: Do you get called to play any particular style?

Kenneth: It's across the board.

MD: There's a song on the previous Candiria CD, *The Coma Imprint*, that has elements of jazz fusion drumming in the style of Dave Weckl. Are you influenced by fusion players?

Kenneth: I went through a John Bonham and Ian Paice stage when I first started playing. In the '80s, my drum teacher started turning me on to guys like Billy Cobham and Tony Williams. And I still remember getting my issue of *Modern Drummer* with Dave Weckl's "Spur Of The Moment" sound supplement. I cut it out of the magazine and put it on my record player and was blown away. I had never heard anyone play drums like that. I went out and bought all of the Chick Corea Elektric Band albums. Then I discovered Vinnie Colaiuta and Steve Gadd and really got into fusion drumming. When you think about rhythm from a simplistic point of view, it's only based on so many fractions. But it's the negative space and the incredible phrasing that make these drummers unique.

MD: Although you've got chops, you still know when to lay down a groove and keep it simple.

Kenneth: I was very influenced by all the soul and R&B drummers from the Motown music that my parents used to listen to all the time. I don't even know any of their names, but those drummers were incredible and taught me the importance of laying down the groove to make a song happen.

MD: How do the more progressive odd-time concepts develop in your songwriting? Are you mostly responsible for that element of the music?

Kenneth: Being the guy who brought the jazz influence into the band, I have turned the other guys on to odd meters. Because the other guys have great minds for music, they learn quickly and they've begun writing from their own perspective, which is usually a more ethereal approach. They might not know how to count it, so I count it out, show them how it fits, and then create beats that fit the riffs.

It's become a very comfortable writing process. They don't worry about what time signature it's in, they just write what feels natural and then we structure it as we go. The writing has become more focused for us, especially on the new album. There's a nice balance between straight-ahead grooves and more progressive ideas.

MD: The last song on the new CD is an instrumental piece titled "The Rutherford Experiment" that sounds very Rush influenced. You're also playing keyboards on that one. In fact, you've played multiple instruments on most of the other recordings, including trumpet and keyboards. How do you handle the multi-instrumentalist role in the band?

Kenneth: When it came time to record this tune, it was decided to add keyboards. I had the idea to record a horn section, but I just played it on a Moog synthesizer instead. I got to have some fun playing keyboards on that one. I'm always down for that. I love playing keyboards. I'm really into melody and songwriting.

MD: Do you play any other instruments?

Kenneth: I actually started on guitar, but once I started playing keyboards I put guitar aside because the keyboard was much easier for me to understand. It became even easier after taking music theory lessons. I'm into writing soulful, jazzy music, and the keyboard became a much easier vehicle for me to get the chord structures together.

MD: I was surprised to see that you play a small kit with few cymbals. Isn't a small kit a rare thing for a metal drummer?

Kenneth: In the early days of playing and rehearsing with Candiria, I used a

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larger kit. At the same time, I was rehearsing with a jam band using a four-piece kit, and I became very comfortable with that. That was also about the time that I started getting into jazz, and the smaller kit felt better for that as well. I've been playing a four-piece kit now for ten years.

MD: From watching a video of you performing with Candiria, it looks like you use pretty large sticks.

Kenneth: I use the Vic Firth Metal model. It's a lot like their Rock model, but a little longer. It's 5/8" thick and 17" long. And I've asked Vic Firth if they could make me a longer stick that's 17 1/4" long.

MD: Watching you play, at times it seems you have a very animated backbeat that starts pretty high up over your head. I was again surprised at how powerfully you play, even while incorporating intricate rhythms into your technique.

Kenneth: Although it may look like I'm swinging frantically, I'm actually very much in control. I'm playing from my sides, and I keep my elbows as close to my waist as possible. If I played this style of music simply using my arm strength, I would probably severely injure myself by overstressing my muscles. What I've created is a heavy metal version of the Moeller technique. Instead of working from the elbow, I'm working from the shoulder. It's a jerking motion from the shoulder that allows the energy to flow through my arm comfortably. This allows the energy generated from the shoulder to pass through the muscles of my arm one step at a time so that I never stress my whole arm at once.

I developed this technique as I started to play heavier gigs. It's a whole different ballgame when you play with this much intensity for several hours as opposed to just practicing in your basement. To warm up for this kind of playing, I have a half-hour stretching regimen that I do before every show.

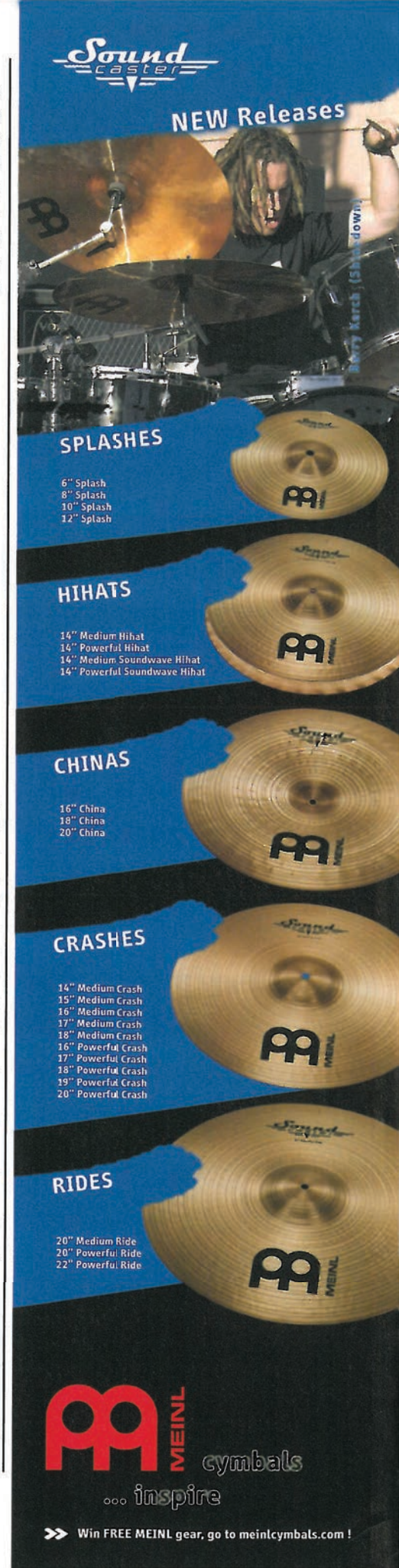
I've also created a very ergonomic placement of my drums so that I can comfortably be in command of my kit. I sit very high over my drums, so I don't have to reach up for anything. This way gravity is in my favor. My muscles are loose and above the kit. When I come down onto the drums, I'm already getting most of my pull and down stroke from gravity itself. It's a way of utilizing the natural pull of the Earth along with the efficiency of muscle energy. This is the proper technique for this style of heavy drumming. If I'm playing jazz, I approach it differently because I'm barely hitting the drums and using lighter sticks.

"I don't know how many drummers are aware of just how many grips there are. Any drummer who focuses on only one grip is really hurting himself."

There are many music genres, and each one has to be approached differently, with individual head preference, stick preference, ergonomics, and playing style. Taking on heavy metal, I had to come up with a system that worked efficiently. When I first started playing metal I was using a 5B stick. But I realized I was putting too much stress on my muscles, because the stick was too light. I needed more weight on the other side of my wrist. That's when I switched to the larger sticks, and it made a world of difference.

MD: How much do you practice, and do you spend time on hand technique?

Kenneth: When I was younger I spent a lot of time practicing and developing chops and hand technique. I worked a lot on the first page of the *Stick Control* book using creative sticking ideas based off of the written exercises. What I realized is that the rudiments are basically made of single and double strokes. So if I just focused on control, balance, and dynamics, I could create my own combinations and become more improvisational with my playing.



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Kenneth Schalk

I see too many drummers base their technique and solo ideas off of rudiments. That gets old to me. I would rather listen to drummers like Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa, Elvin Jones, and Art Blakey, players who didn't think like rudimentary marching drummers. They thought like great *musicians* and improvised off of singles and doubles without thinking about what the sticking was. That's the approach I like to take. I eventually reached a point where I wanted to learn to play other instruments, and that's when I decided that I wanted to be a drummer who played for the song and not really a heavy chops player.

I exercise my hands every day. I feel that my consistency, balance, and control are good. My dynamic control is what really helped get me in focus with proper sticking and technique. I don't know how many drummers are aware of just how many grips there are. Any drummer who focuses on only one grip is really hurting himself, in my opinion. There's a different grip for each type of dynamic. If you hold the stick the same way when you hit hard as when you play softly, you're not going to have as much control as you would if you developed the proper grip for each situation.

I've developed a couple of my own grips for my hands because of how hard I have to hit the drums. There's a grip that I use where the butt end of the stick is nestled in between my ring finger and my middle finger. I close my fingers together, and the stick is all the way up in my hand between my fingers. I developed this technique after realizing that the closer the butt end of the stick is to your wrist, the more stress your wrist develops. So when I'm hitting that hard, I have to get the stick as far away from my wrist as possible. I had to develop my finger strength in order to hold the stick in between my fingers, because I'm basically holding the stick with two fingers. This still allows me to get a snappy wrist action so I can get a solid crack out of the snare. When I'm in the studio, it's totally different. But for live playing, I have to use this technique to protect my wrists from too much stress.

MD: Do you practice much now?

Kenneth: Being on tour and making albums keeps me busy enough, and there really isn't much time to practice. But because I'm playing all the time, I'm maintaining my chops. But, at the same time, by writing music and developing song ideas, I feel I'm still growing as a drummer. You're locking into your own personal pocket, creating your own identity, and building a better consistency as a player. I make time to practice and create new ideas for the music when we're ready to record a new album.

MD: When you play live, do you challenge yourself to create new ideas, or do you stick to the recorded arrangements?

Kenneth: When we work on a new record, I always make sure that I leave sections in the songs open for improvisation. That way I can choose to learn something that might become a part of the song, or it may remain a section that's open.

MD: There has always been a struggle between art and commerce in the music business. How do you deal with the struggle of retaining your artistic integrity while trying to keep up with the constantly changing music business?

Kenneth: I look at life as a continual learning and growing process. We all have the ability to comprehend and retain information. Most of us went to school or continue to go to school. In school you have to continually comprehend and retain information so that you can advance to the next grade level. I look at life and music the same way. You have to continually comprehend and retain information about how to succeed in life, otherwise you will fail.

As a band, we realize this and understand that we must keep up with the music and the business that music is. Our passion for the band is as strong as our passion as individuals. We've worked hard to become the musicians that we are, and we have the same passion for the success of the band

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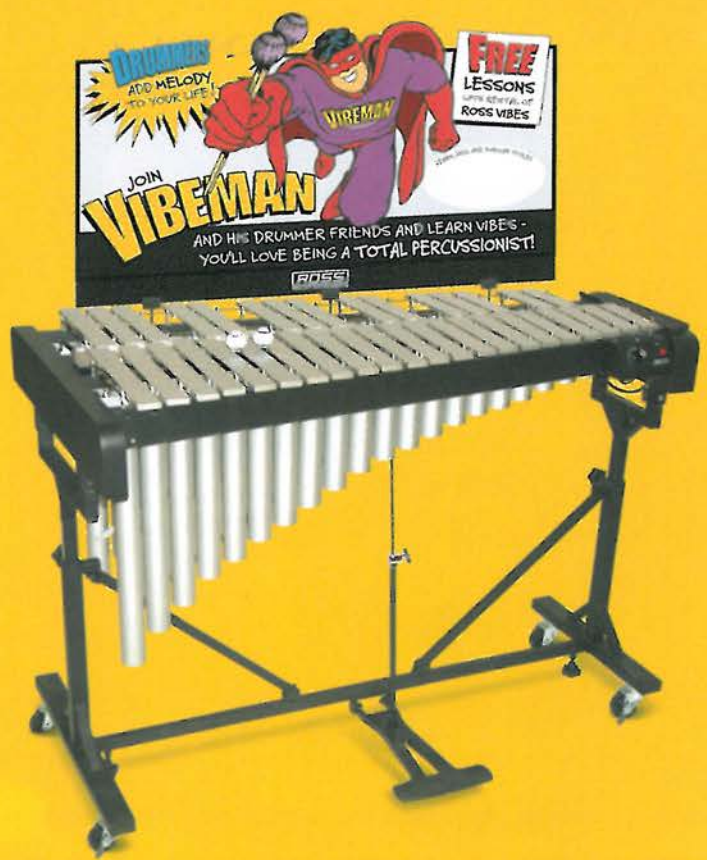

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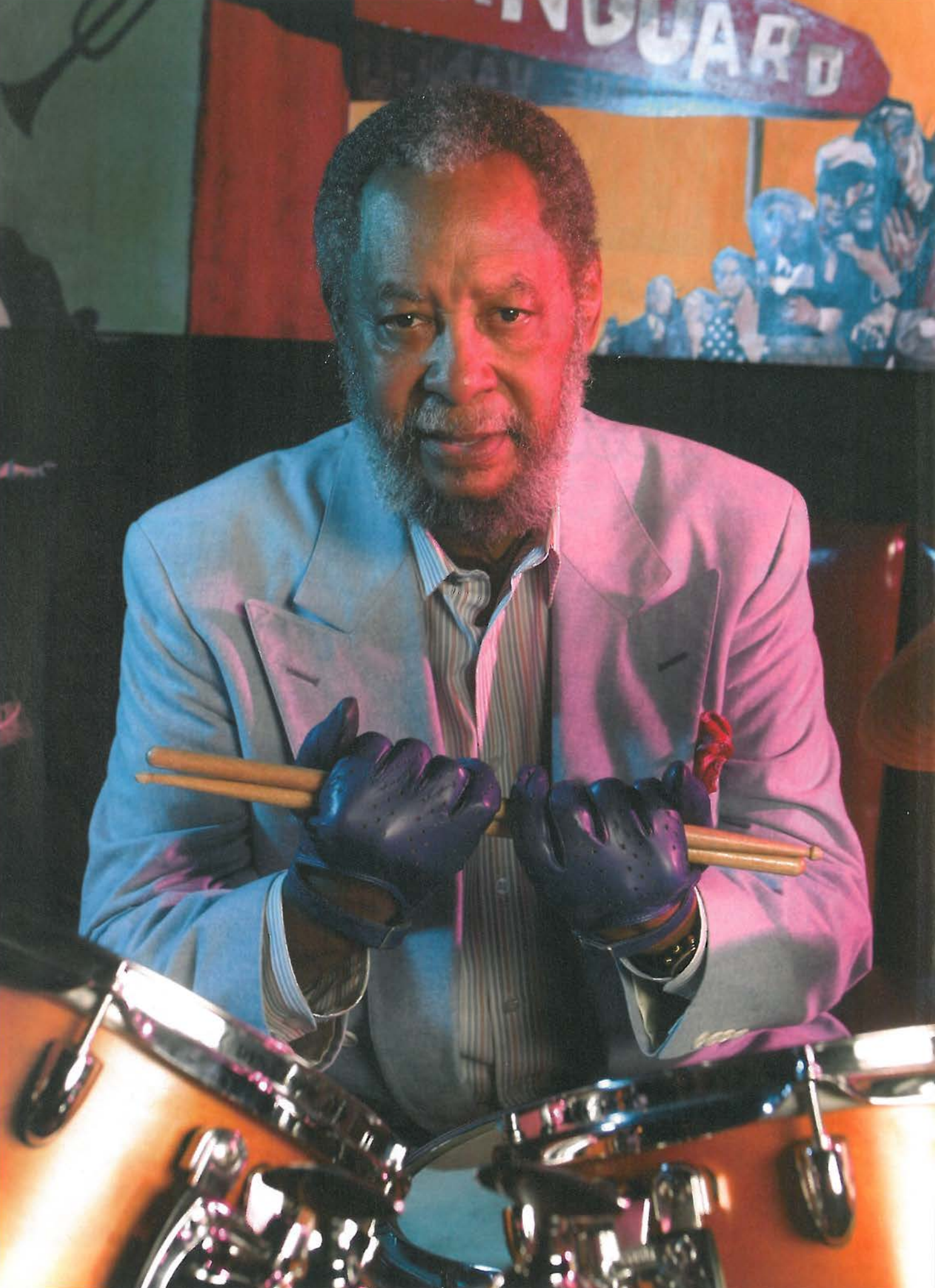
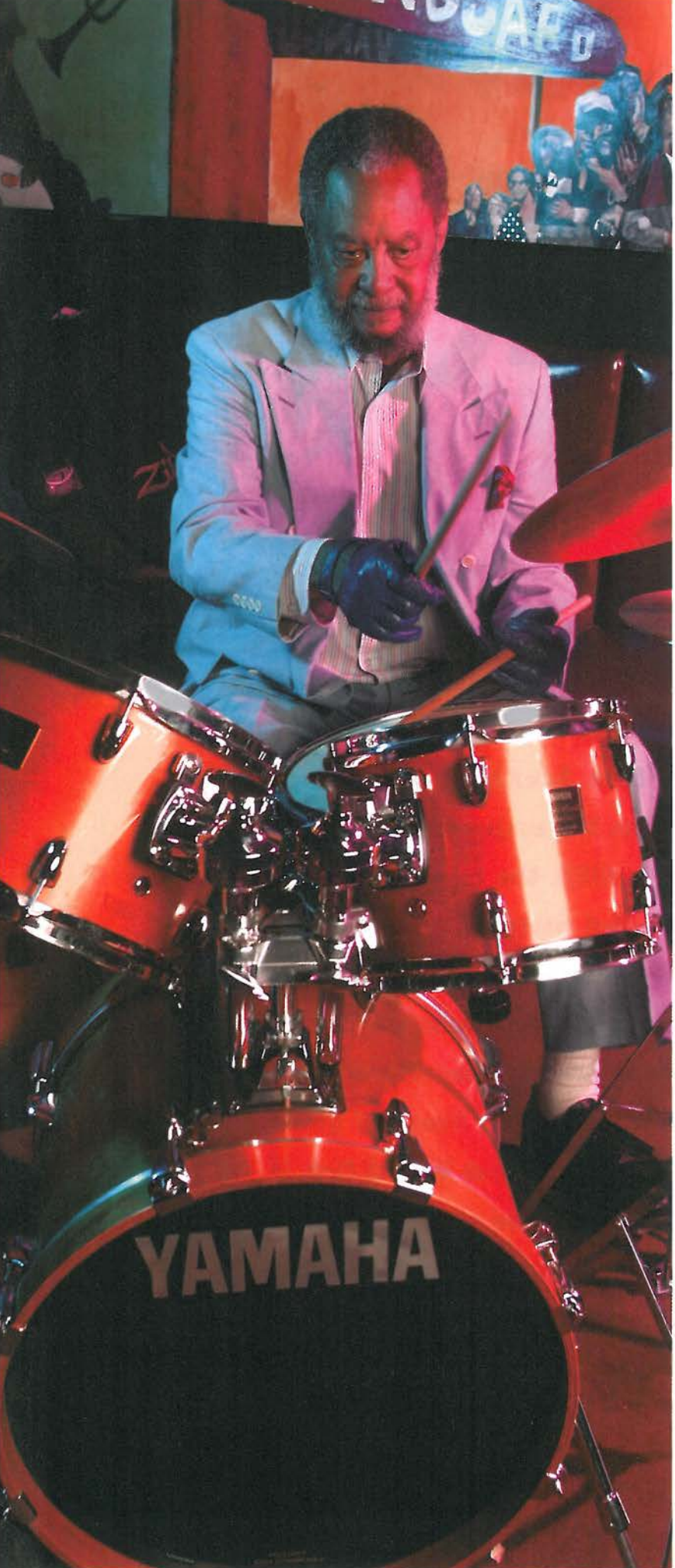


Ben Riley

Power Of The Lion, Patience Of The Ages

Story by Ken Micallef *Photos by Paul La Raia*

At a recent reunion performance featuring members of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, Ben Riley provided the rhythmic fire to the band's hard-bopping melodic flash. Assembling at New York's Iridium jazz club on the anniversary of Blakey's birth (October 11, 1919), the Riley-led all-star group that included bassist Lonnie Plaxico, pianist John Hicks, alto saxophonist Bobby Watson, and tenor great Gary Bartz was finding its feet. While the musicians displayed strong conviction as soloists, the unison lines and group playing were less than perfect–at least at first. If not for Riley's firm hand, the night might have devolved into a jumble of casual ensemble playing, missed cues, and irresolute endings.



Ben Riley commands respect from the moment he hits the bandstand. While he is best known (and beloved) for his years spent in Thelonious Monk's quartet at the peak of that master's powers, Riley has also recorded and performed with many other jazz greats. His flexible artistic demeanor and powerful time feel, coupled with a talent for finding unique solutions for practically every situation, has kept the drummer busy for the thirty-plus years since leaving Monk's services.

Riley's résumé is a who's who of jazz: Andrew Hill, Hank Jones, Barry Harris, Junior Mance, Nina Simone, Alice Coltrane, Abdullah Ibrahim, Barney Kessel, Sonny Rollins, Stan Getz, Chet Baker, Johnny Griffin, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, and Sphere, the Monk tribute group that features some of Riley's best drumming. All this from a musician whose first exposure to the drums was the marching brass bands he heard as a toddler in Savannah, Georgia.

Now seventy-one years old, Riley looks like a gentle lion behind the drums. His gaze falls somewhere beyond the audience as he concentrates, whipping the cymbals and jabbing the snare drum in constant motion. With The Messengers, Riley took a different tack for each soloist, applying unique colors to the musicians' personalities and approaches.

Playing classic Blakey numbers like Wayne Shorter's "One By One," Freddie Hubbard's "Up Jumped Spring," and Benny Golson's "Whisper Not," the group shifted gears as Riley altered the groove. His drumming was fluid, soulful, and endlessly inventive. Behind Bartz's roaring tenor, Riley drew a tart attack. For Watson, the drummer's sound turned silky and streamlined. For Hicks, piano and drums became pointed and aggressive, matching melodic twists with muscular jabs.

Throughout the night, Riley's cymbals shifted from autumnally dark to bossa nova cool, from dry and hard to liquid and sensual. All of this out of two ride cymbals and a 21" China. Occasionally leaning into the cymbals when extra punch was needed, Riley exuded all the strength of a '70s Cadillac cruising with the top down, the road ahead serene, secure, and smoking.

Like all of the greatest musicians, Ben Riley is a storyteller. That holds true for his skills of verbal communication as well as his musical accompaniment. And his album as a leader, *Weaver Of Dreams*, shows him to be just as resolute as his hard-touring band, The Ben Riley Group, is in concert. Though his energy has been slightly curtailed by bouts with diabetes and lung problems, Riley maintains a schedule as intense as any young jazz musician. No wonder Monk hired him without an audition, and ten minutes into the opening song of his first gig shouted, "Drum solo!" Afterwards, Monk nudged Riley, "How many people could have done what you just did?"

For sure, there is only one Ben Riley.

MD: You have been affiliated with so many leaders, and you've remained busy through the years. What are the elements of your drumming that keep you in demand?

Ben: I came up in an era of accompaniment. We all had to learn how to do it—not only solo, but *accompany*. I enjoy that more than soloing, because each person I've worked with has had different attitudes, songs, and styles of playing. It makes me very aware of trying to enhance whatever they are doing. I never come on a job thinking, "I'm going to play this or play that." I wait to see what they're going to do and then fit into that picture.

MD: Did each leader bring out different facets of your drumming?

Ben: Yes. I had different styles to think about every time I played. When I came to work it was like going to school. I never knew what was going to happen next, so I was bright-eyed and bushy-tailed.

MD: How would you approach Junior Mance differently from, say, Johnny Griffin or Alice Coltrane?

Ben: Junior and I worked together quite a bit. I could understand what he was going to do and anticipate different ways he was going to go. Griffin was more wide open because he wanted you to really flow along with what he was doing. With Alice, it was a totally different environment for me. Playing with her, I had to find a rhythm out of what she was doing and play that against whatever was going on.

I couldn't stay in one place with Alice. I had to accommodate what she was doing. One of the hardest things I ever did was play some music of hers with the Los Angeles Symphony Orchestra that they had already recorded. I had to overdub the drums after the orchestra had already recorded their parts.

MD: Did they use a click track?

Ben: No. Alice gave me some clues about what she wanted to hear. The orchestra played in numbers rather than tempos. Their tempos varied between different sections and different instruments. So I had to find something that would fit all of the sections. It was fantastic. I also overdubbed on some things that John Coltrane had recorded without drums.

MD: I understand you were scheduled to record with Coltrane.

Ben: Yes, we were supposed to record as a duo just before he passed. We never got to it because he had taken ill the day we were to begin. We never had the opportunity.

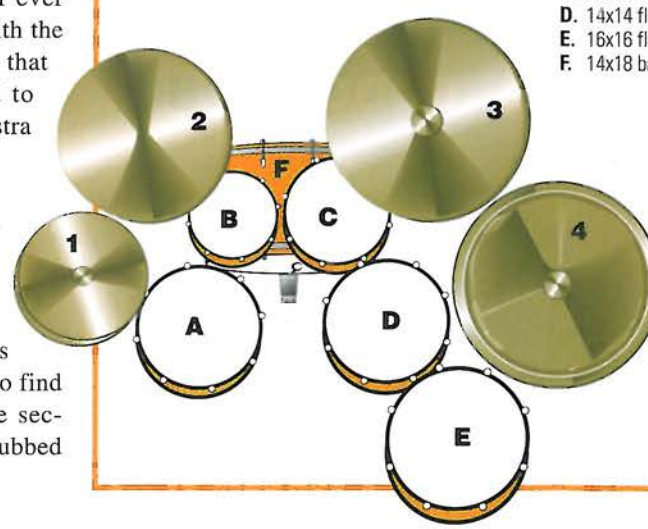
MD: Then there is your work with Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis and Johnny Griffin, The Tough Tenors. Your spirit really comes out on those records. You sound a little like Billy Higgins at times—not so much in what you're playing, but in that positive spirit of the swing, that bounce.

Ben: Higgins and I interpreted a great deal alike. We liked some of the same people, like Kenny Clarke and Shadow Wilson. I started out playing a bit like Max Roach, but once I heard Kenny and Shadow, I thought that fit me a little better. I even played a little bit like Roy Haynes for a short period.

MD: The Tough Tenors' records sound so joyous and musical.

Ben: And that's playing in three different styles. Junior played one way, Lockjaw played another, and Griffin played yet another. I had three different things to deal with, so it was *always* interesting. I had to be alert.

Ben's Kit



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Riley On Record

Recordings

Artist	Album
Sonny Rollins	The Bridge
Thelonious Monk	Underground
Alice Coltrane	Ptah The El Daoud
Kenny Barron	The Only One
Ben Riley	Weaver Of Dreams
Abdullah Ibrahim	Water From An Ancient Well
Junior Mance	Live At The Village Vanguard
Sphere	Bird Songs
Phil Woods	The Rev And I (Featuring Johnny Griffin)
Gary Bartz	There Goes The Neighborhood
Johnny Griffin And Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis	Tough Tenors

Favorites

Artist	Album	Drummer
Miles Davis	Walkin'	Kenny Clarke
Kenny Clarke	With Francy Boland Big Band	Kenny Clarke
Miles Davis	Milestones	Philly Joe Jones
Duke Ellington	Ellington At Newport	Sam Woodyard
Max Roach	Max Roach Plus Four	Max Roach
Roy Haynes	Out Of The Afternoon	Roy Haynes
Thelonious Monk	Thelonious Monk With John Coltrane	Shadow Wilson

MD: You mention Junior Mance. Your album with him, *Live At The Village Vanguard*, is soulful and funky.

Ben: He and I developed a really good relationship in that band. We had played together in a trio before. I was accustomed to how Junior approached music. He was into a heavy Chicago blues style. He was even like Kansas City sometimes, with the rolling of the piano notes like Jay McShann. I played with him too.

MD: You also recorded with Duke Ellington [*Solos, Duets, And Trios*].

Ben: Yes, I recorded with five piano players on that recording—Duke, Willie "The Lion" Smith, Billy Taylor, Earl Fatha Hines, and, of course, my girl, Mary Lou Williams.

MD: I understand that you lived around the corner from Roy Haynes in New York for a while in the late '50s, when you first started your career.

Ben: I lived at 148th right off Broadway, and Roy was at 149th. We became friends. That neighborhood was something. Billie Holliday was on 147th, and Mel Lewis was across the street. Many of the residents of Harlem moved up to what we called Sugar Hill. It's from 145th to 155th. That's where Manhattan starts to get more hilly. Sonny Rollins and Art Taylor came out of that neighborhood.

MD: What one drummer had the biggest impact on your drumming in those formative years?

Ben: Kenny Clarke. I could be walking down 52nd Street past all the clubs and know which one he was playing in. I would sit at Birdland on Monday

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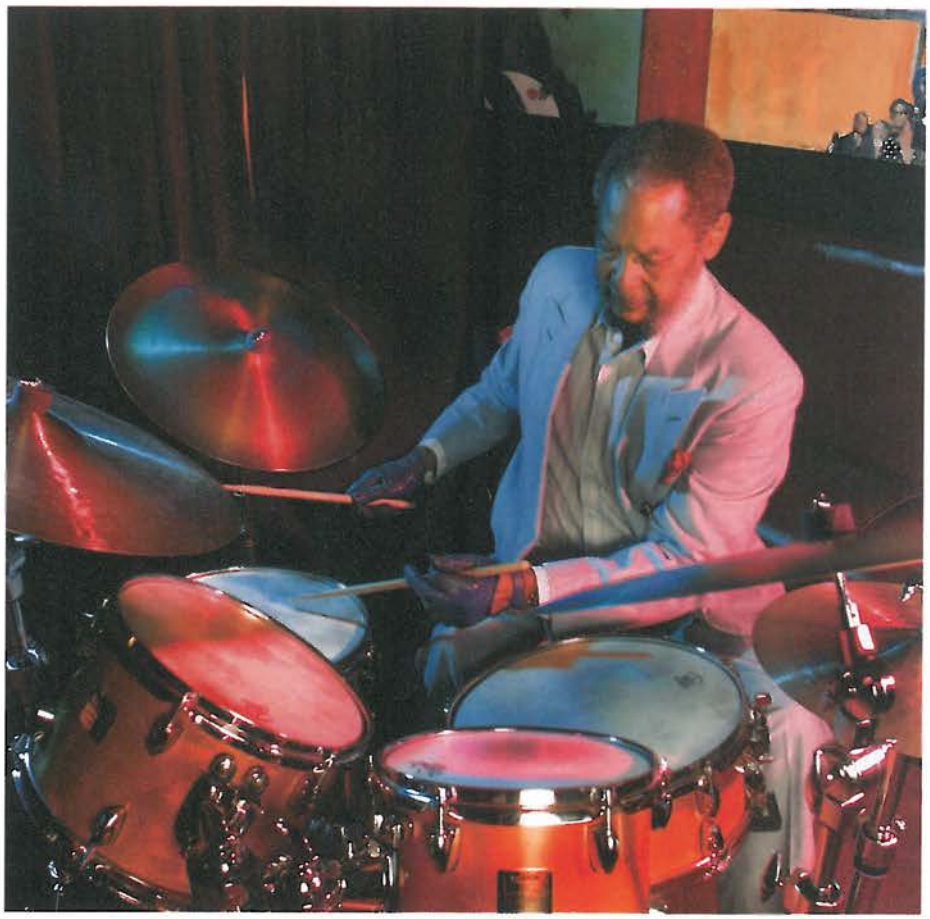
nights when Kenny was playing with Miles' band. I'd stay there all night. Then when I got home, I would play, but I would interpret it my way rather than the way he played it. I was overwhelmed by Kenny, but I wanted to do it my own way.

MD: Back to the Tough Tenor records. You sound like you were all having a ball. How did that come together?

Ben: I was working with a lot of singers and piano trios at that time, including Nina Simone. I played with her for a year. Then I was up at the Newport Jazz Festival with Kenny Burrell and Major Holley, who I had worked with for a long time. Johnny Griffin came to the festival with no rhythm section, so he used Ray Bryant, Major Holley, and me. After that gig Griffin told me that he and Lockjaw had a band and he wanted me to be in it.

MD: Some of those tracks are very fast and quite long, and you play the standard ride cymbal pattern with no variation, which is harder than breaking it up.

Ben: When we played that fast it got to the point where I would not look at my hands. I just had to beef up mentally and



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not think about the tempo. Actually, playing with singers got me accustomed to singing melodies to myself. When I played very fast like that, I would always keep the melody in my mind so I wouldn't be thinking of the tempo.

MD: When we spoke with Bill Stewart a few months ago [August 2004 *MD*], he commented on how jazz musicians don't play as many fast tempos as they used to back in the bop or post-bop days.

Ben: For one thing, it's very difficult! [laughs] And with the freeform way of playing that most groups use today, playing fast tempos would be like going to war. You'd be clashing, because no one person is seemingly responsible for the time. Everybody is contributing their idea of what the song is supposed to be rather than keeping time. We used to do the same thing, but we would always mark beat 1 so everybody knew where we were. We also had a real sense of camaraderie. Today, a lot of the musicians don't play melodically. They just play rhythmically, playing lines whether they fit or not.

MD: Is the lack of camaraderie among today's jazz musicians due to the economy? Perhaps they don't have as many US touring opportunities and can't develop that closeness.

Ben: Back in the day, it would be nothing to see five drummers going out to hear another drummer. We always hung out together and exchanged ideas. I don't see that today. That's how the music became strong, because we all had our own approaches, and we shared them. Too many players today are being petty and thinking so much about money that they forget they are there to play.

Years ago, sometimes we only made ten dollars a night. But we were learning how to play—from 9:00 P.M. to 4:00 A.M.—and then we would go to an after-hours joint and jam and make some money off the tips. But we never put money in front of learning. The first thing that gets asked today is, "How much do I get paid?" They don't ask about the music.

MD: The knowledge drummers like you and Roy Haynes have is not always disseminated as it should be.

Ben: I just did a master class at Yale with

Jackie Williams, Tootie Heath, and Ed Thigpen. We did a three-day master class and then a concert. We taught brushes, mallets, sticks, hands, and tambourine. We showed rhythm melodies from the drums. The audience didn't want us to leave.

MD: What did you focus on?

Ben: I focused on the two different ways I use brushes. For the most part, I play brushes the same way I play sticks, except for the left hand, which I slide around for different sounds. I showed the students many brush patterns, like how I slide the left and right hands over and across. And I showed them Ahmad Jamal's "Poinciana" rhythm, which is played with mallets.

I used to play with "pressure points" with my fingers, but after I got sick I couldn't do it anymore—my fingers slide off the sticks. To do it today, I play with gloves to hold onto the sticks.

MD: How do you use pressure points?

Ben: Rather than using the old arm-enforced technique, I snap my wrist and hold a brush or a stick a certain way with a certain amount of pressure to get a sound, almost like you would if you pounded down on the drum. I am not a pounder, but I can get a snap out of it that sounds like I am playing heavy.

MD: How did you develop that?

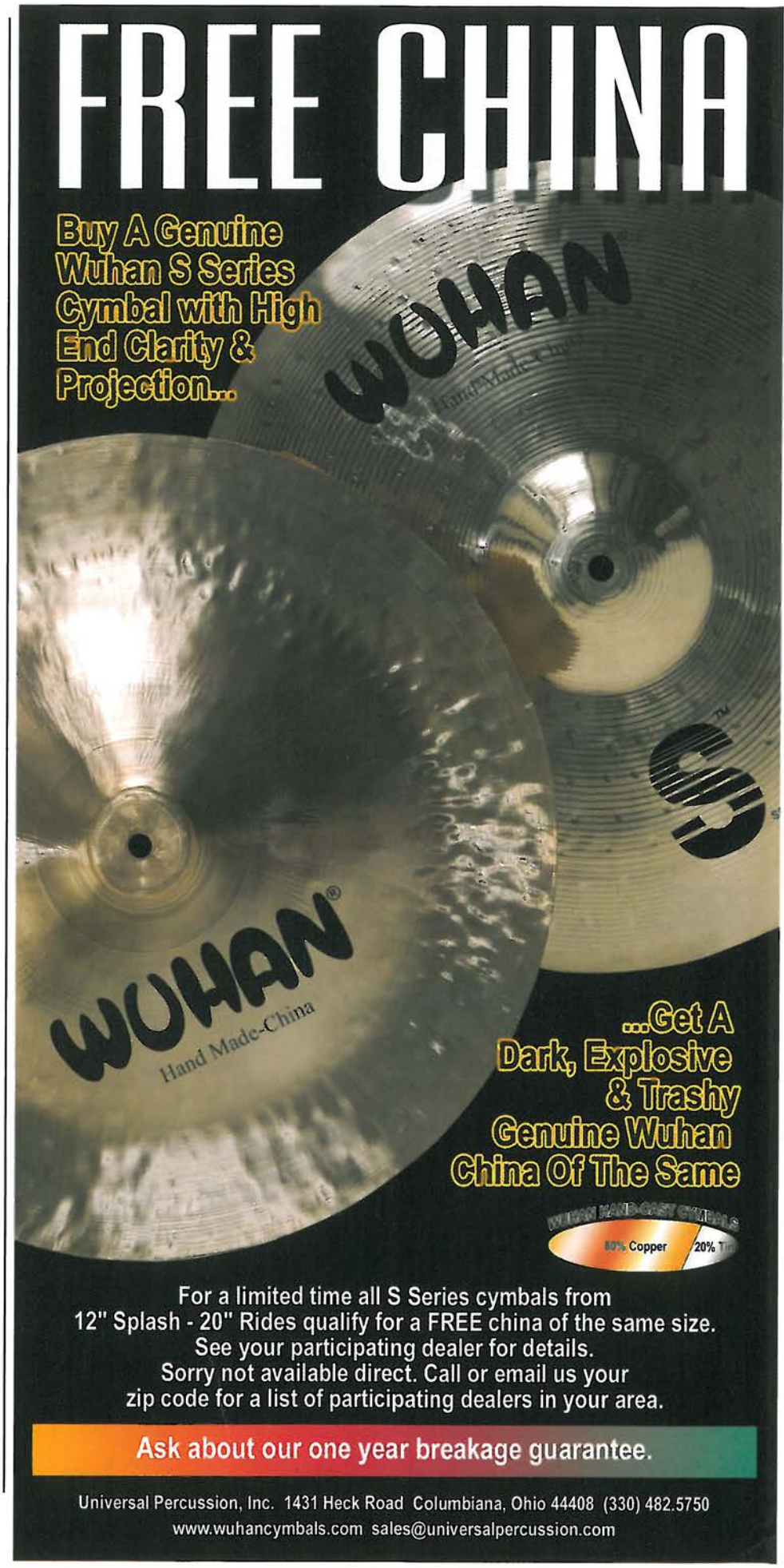
Ben: In the old days, staying in boarding houses and such, I would practice on pillows. I would practice every day on a pillow so no one would complain. That helped me develop my technique.

MD: Your drumming has a real sense of elegance.

Ben: I think of people like Sam Woodyard, drummers I watched when I was young. Or the way Max Roach would sit very elegantly, very correctly, and the way he played. So I emulated that. I took a little bit from each drummer that I heard. But I would never try to play something exactly like another drummer.

MD: How did you develop your determined, clear cymbal sound?

Ben: I worked in rooms on the east side like Basin Street and the Astor Hotel lounge, where they only booked trios. This is back in the early '50s. You couldn't use sticks in those rooms—brushes only. The reason for this was you were set up right



Ben Riley

next to people having dinner. That's where I met Ed Shaughnessy, Sonny Igoe, and Ed Thigpen. They were the only drummers allowed to play with sticks in those clubs, because they had such great control. I was determined that I would play sticks in those clubs too. My touch came from that experience, and I developed it by thinking and listening.

MD: Did you learn to play very close to the head?

Ben: I found a way to touch the cymbals and the drums without scaring the people or cause them to drop their forks! [laughs] I understood that you didn't have to bang to get a sound. Everything was very close, so one little short snap of the wrist would do if I wanted to play an accent. I also learned how to play with colors. I use three very different cymbals, and on each chorus I switch cymbals for the soloist, depending on his dynamics.

MD: Some of today's jazz drummers still feather the bass drum and tip the ride cymbal. What are some of the other things that the drummers did when you were coming up?

Ben: Kenny Clarke would sometimes play four or eight bars and then accent one beat. That would give a little goose to

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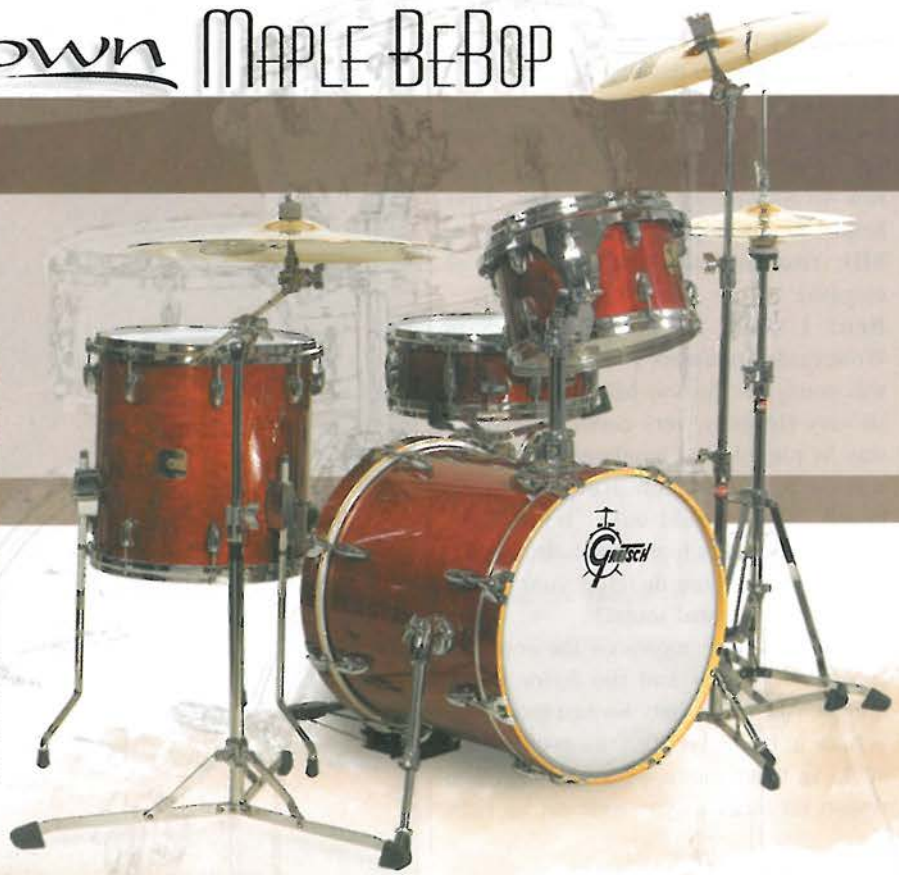

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the soloist and make him swing even harder. Shadow Wilson would play time and sometimes play almost nothing with his left hand, and yet the time felt so good you would want to get up and dance. Those things stay with you.

MD: Do you feather the bass drum at those really fast tempos?

Ben: Yes, although I don't do it for as long as I used to.

MD: What is the key to feathering? It seems more felt than heard.

Ben: You don't make yourself conscious of it, just like I mentioned earlier about playing fast tempos. Don't make yourself conscious of the tempo. Make yourself conscious of the melody. And, of course, you have to listen to who you're playing behind and anticipate what he's going to do. If his voice rises, you rise with him.

MD: It sounds like you're listening more to the soloist than to yourself.

Ben: That's it. And I always listen to the rhythm section. Piano is the full orchestra. The greater the accompanist is on the piano, the easier it is for me to play.

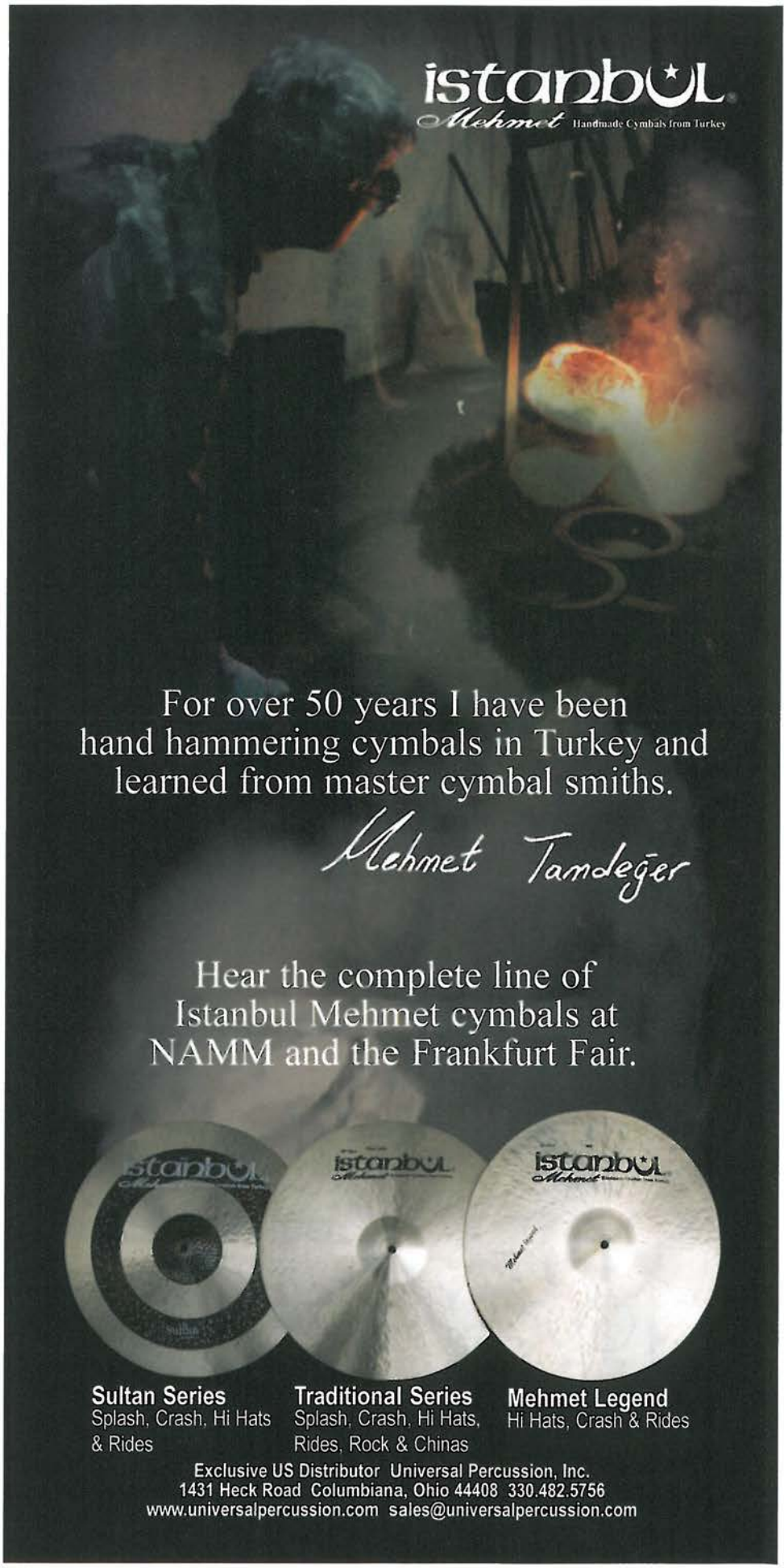
Thelonious Monk always said to me, "When you're playing, you are listening. You might not like every song you play as much as the next guy. Whoever likes a song the most will be the strongest on it and he'll have the best time, so play with him." That's why I always listen on stage to see who likes the song the most. That person will have the best beat and the strongest time.

MD: Let's switch gears and talk about what it was like to go to Art Blakey's legendary jam sessions in Harlem.

Ben: I would never ask to sit in at Art's place. But when he was at 7th Avenue in Harlem, I would go early to watch. The more famous musicians in the neighborhood would play first. I remember when Philly Joe first came to New York and played there. When he finished, the house drummer whose gig it was wanted me to go up. I said, "No, this is your job, you go up. I'm not going up after that!" Philly fired those drums up and there was smoke coming up from them. But eventually, they started letting me play all the time.

MD: Is that how your career began?

Ben: My wife knew I wasn't happy working at my day job, and she said I should



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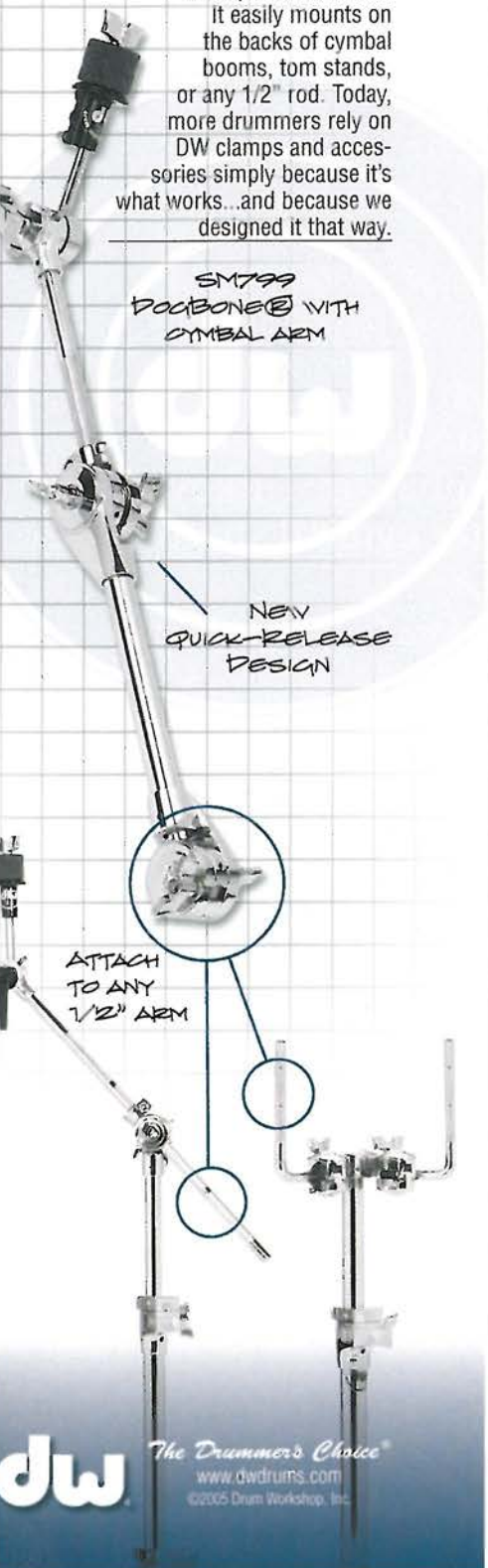

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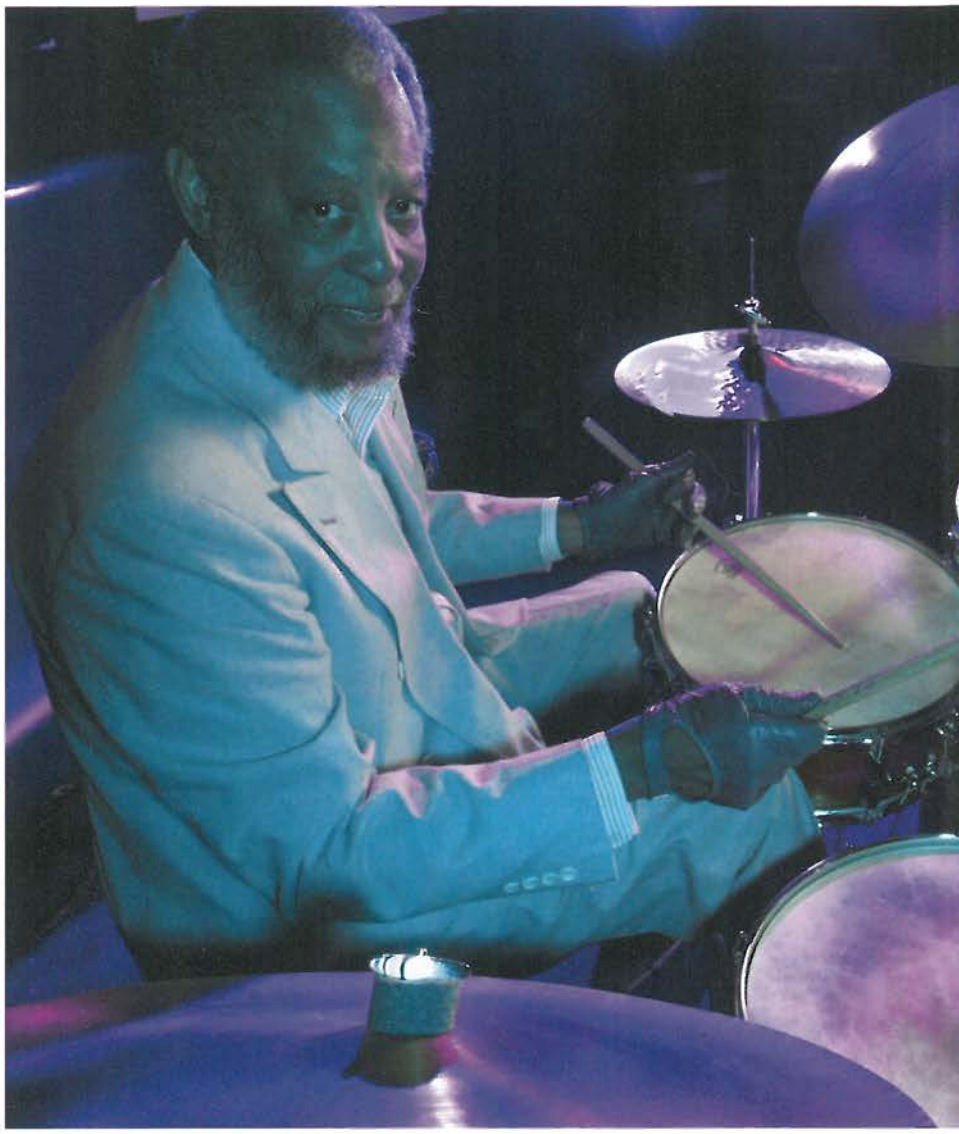


"Play wrong. The more you try to play right, the more tension you have, so let it go. You have to make a mistake to be right."

give myself a year to see if I could get a playing career going. In 1954, right after the Korean War, I was working as a film editor. Well, I started getting gigs, and I haven't looked back since.

MD: Were there a lot of jam sessions in the '50s?

Ben: Yes, all over town. I played in all the little clubs in Harlem, Brooklyn, Queens, and The Bronx. Every borough in New York City had jazz every night.

MD: Did you practice for hours?

Ben: I would play along with records for hours.

MD: How did the leaders that you had longer tenures with—Ron Carter, Monk, Alice Coltrane, Abdullah Ibrahim—change your drumming?

Ben: Each had definite ideas about what they wanted to do, so I would take what they were doing and incorporate it into what I wanted to do. It was a matter of learning. I was the first drummer in Abdullah's band. His music had all those African rhythms, and that was beautiful for me. I developed that and incorporated it into my style.

MD: Did you share more of a kinship with Monk and Coltrane?

Ben: Yes, but I learned from everyone I worked with. I learned about how to live. All that comes out in your playing. My mannerisms have developed from all of those life experiences. Working with and being around Thelonious was like attending a major music school. He gave me the opportunity to employ whatever I thought fit. If it fit, he would say, "That's it."

MD: When did Monk first see you play?

Ben: He first saw me at the Five Spot, where I was playing with three different trios. Thelonious would come into the club while I was playing, but he would go into the kitchen, so I didn't know at the time if he was listening to me—but he was.

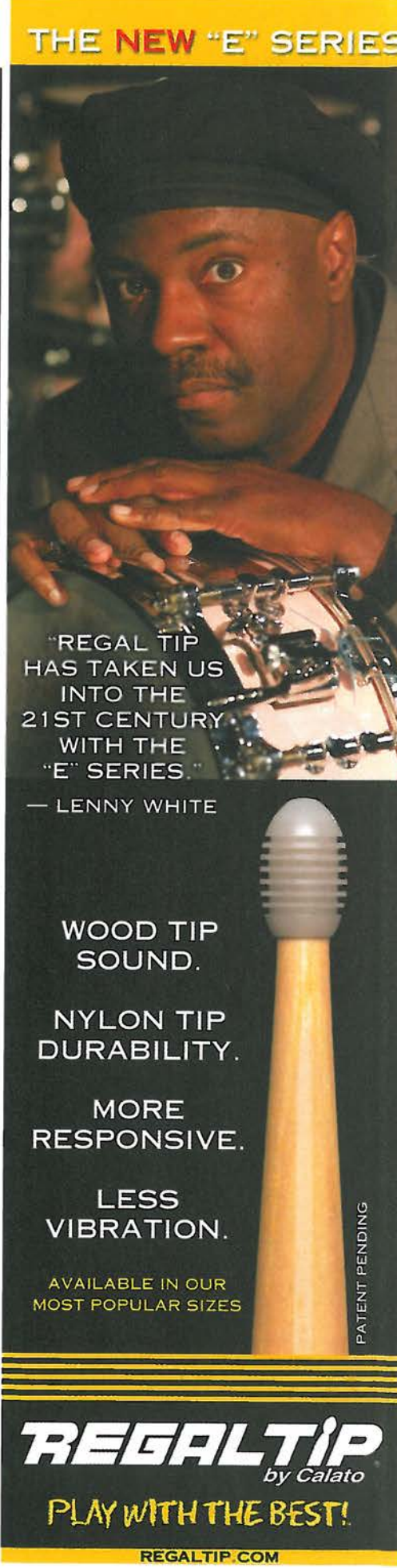
MD: Did Monk say anything to you during your first rehearsal with him?

Ben: We never rehearsed. Monk just came out and started playing. He knew I would listen. He saw me sitting there every night at the Five Spot when his band came on. But he didn't acknowledge me. He knew I was onto what he was doing, because I was listening. I heard him when he played with Trane, Shadow Wilson, and Wilbur Ware.

MD: So Monk asked you to come down...

Ben: He didn't ask me nothing. His manager called and asked me to come down to Columbia for a record date. He said that they were waiting for me. After the manager convinced me this was true, I went down there. And Monk didn't speak to me until after we finished the session. He said, "Do you need any money? I don't want anybody in my band being broke." I said, "Excuse me?" He repeated himself and asked, "Do you have a passport? You better go get it because we're leaving for Europe on Friday." That's how I knew I got the gig.

We immediately went to the Royal Festival Hall in London. Everybody of importance was there. Limousines were double-parked outside. Monk began the show with a ballad, and in the middle of it he jumped up from the piano and said, "Drum solo!" It was *frightening* to see all



those people sitting out there on my first show with Monk. But I did it. We went to the dressing room at the intermission and he said to me, "How many people could have done what you just did?" I had passed my first test.

MD: Did Monk's quartet ever rehearse?

Ben: When I asked Monk about rehearsals he said, "Why do you want to do that, so you can learn how to cheat? You already know how to play. Now play wrong and make *that* right."

MD: Did Monk ever give you any direction?

Ben: Once, after I played a drum solo with brushes, he asked me, "How did you know how to do that? You know it's been done before, but how did you learn to do it?" Then he just walked away.

One day I started playing like Shadow Wilson and Kenny Clarke and he came up to me on the break and said, "Oh, you're not playing that Roy Haynes shit no more." I had listened to Roy play with him and had tried to do that, but it didn't work for me. That's when I knew that Monk wasn't crazy like they all said. This man was listening to *everything*.

MD: How did you grasp his rhythmic concept?

Ben: I had listened to him for weeks before I ever played with him and thought I had it down. But when I got up there and he tapped off those tempos, it was totally different. He played in between tempos. Monk said most musicians could only play slow, medium, or fast. He played in between all of that. You could never predict what he would do. We would always play a song differently.

MD: Did that make it difficult for you?

Ben: No. It made me think more. I had to be open all the time. "Straight No Chaser" was different every night. I had to find something different to play. Because of that I developed patience. It was about learning what to do with space.

MD: Do you ever listen to the records you made with Monk?

Ben: Yes, since I am now dealing with that music again in the Monk tribute band. The band is *my* band. It consists of some of the best players in town.

MD: What did you stress to them to get into the Monk spirit?

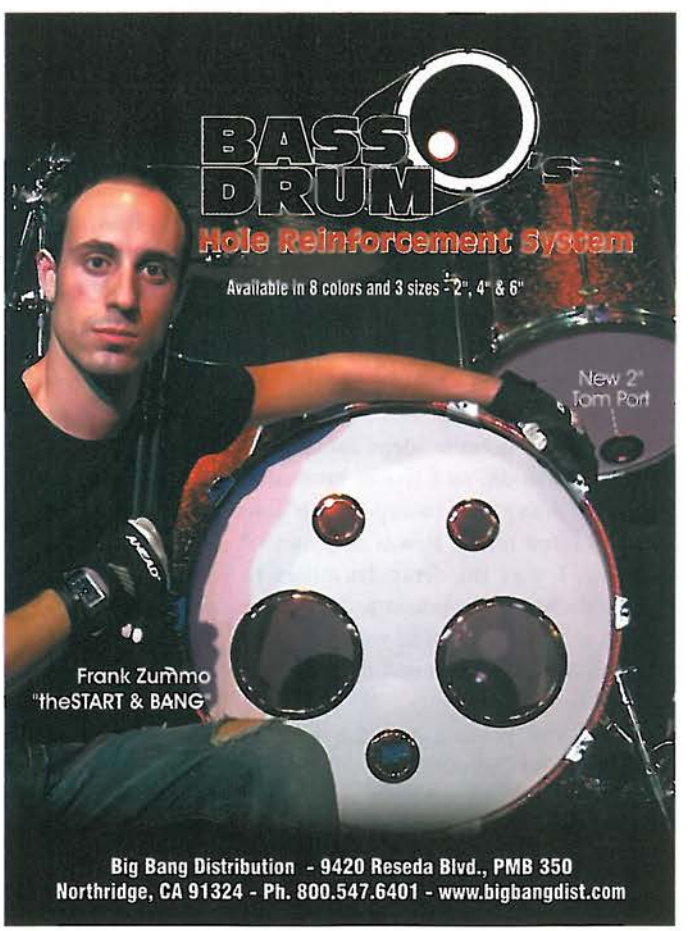
Ben: Play wrong. The more you try to play right, the more tension you have, so let it go. You have to make a mistake to be right. Play it as you feel it.

MD: What keeps you inspired?

Ben: I still go out to listen to people, especially young guys coming up. I never try to tell young people anything, unless they ask me. I don't put myself in that position. Unfortunately, some of them think they know everything. But being around them keeps me inspired. I can still feel the juices.

MD: What do you look for in players coming up today?

Ben: I look for honesty. That's the key to being unique. Be honest with yourself. Don't copy. Let me hear *you*.



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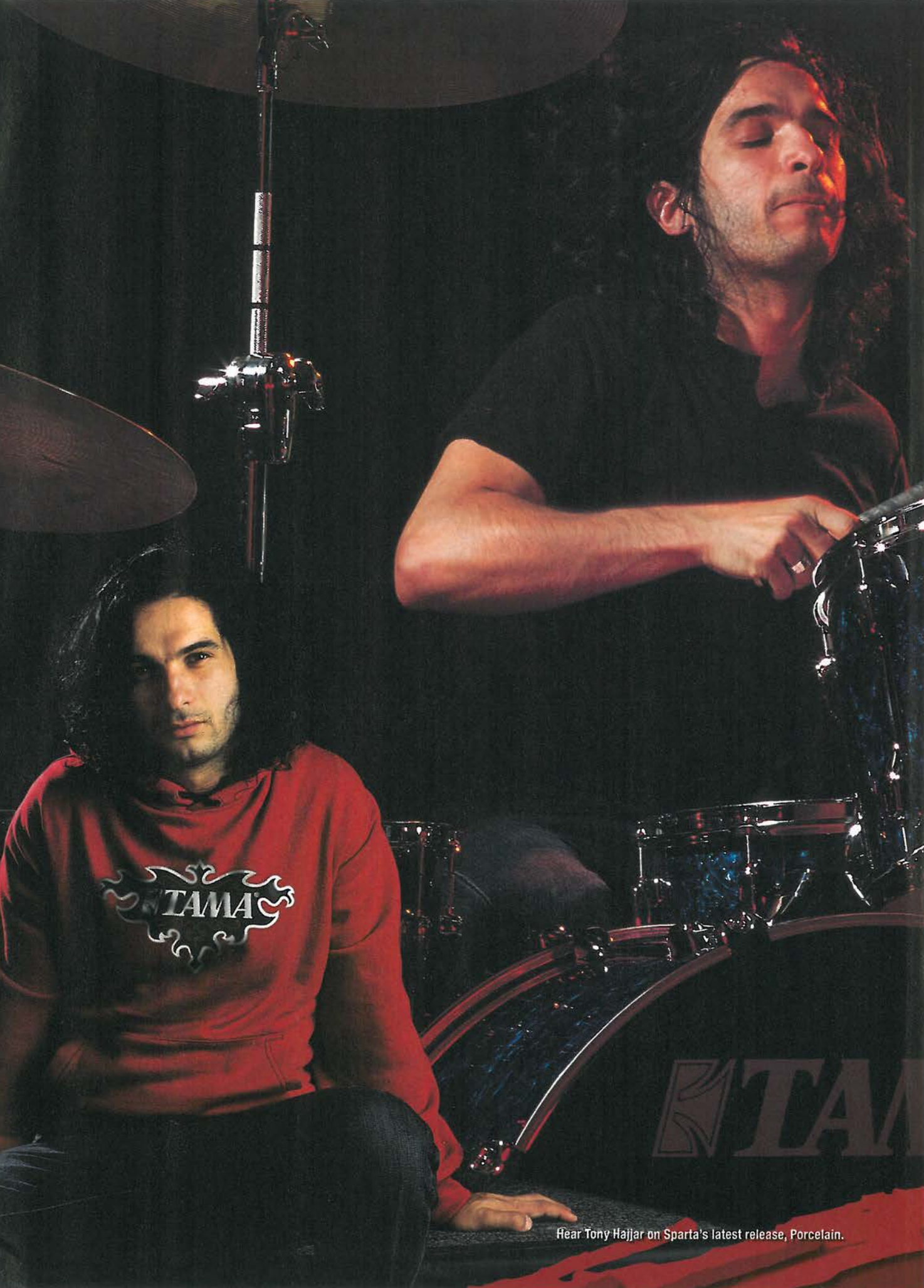

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MAROON 5'S RYAN DUSICK

FINDING THE FUNK

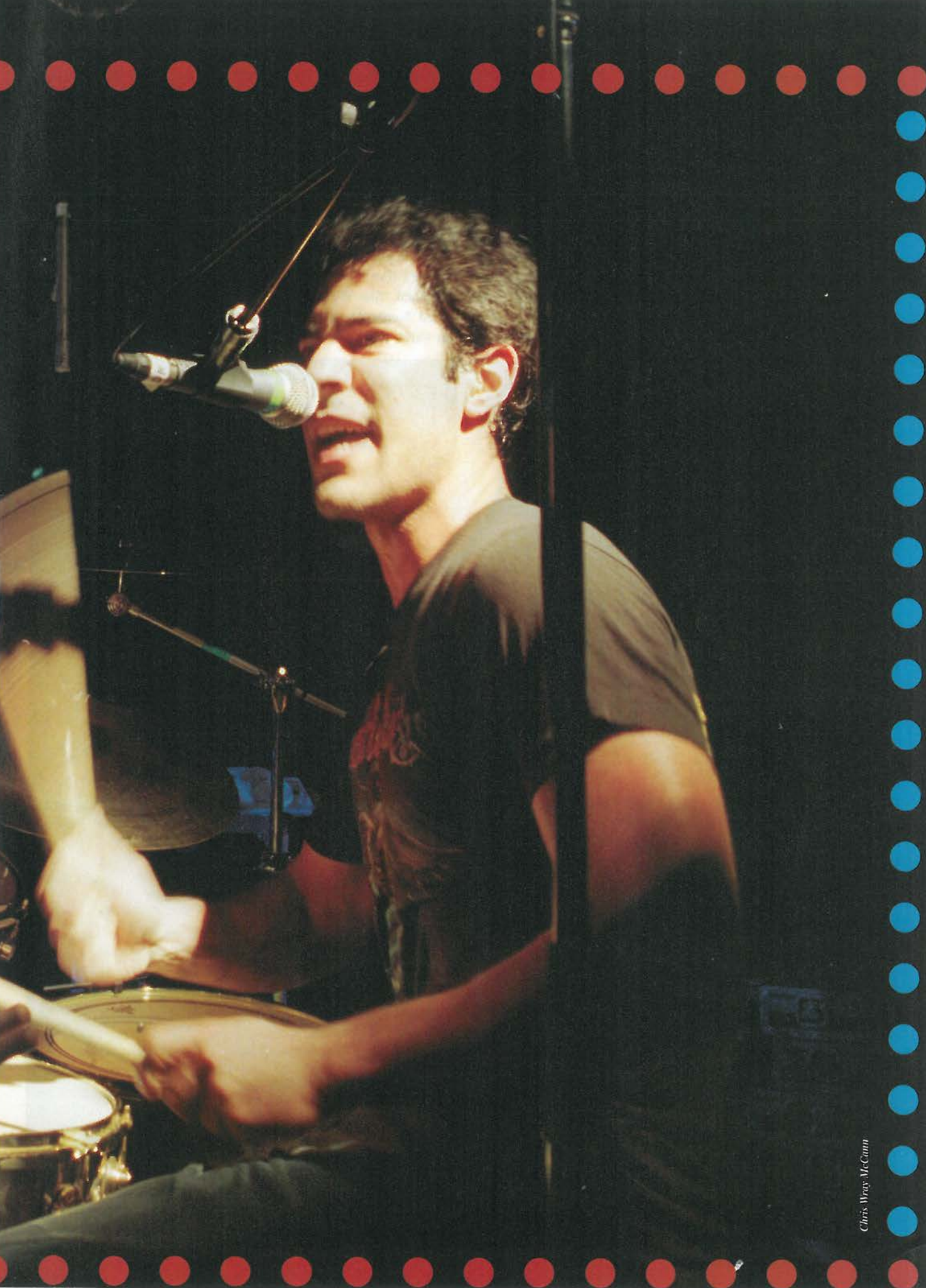
by Gail Worley

This is the story of one rock-turned-funk drummer and how his band got its groove back. In 1997, Los Angeles alternative rock band Kara's Flowers released its major-label debut, *Fourth World*. Produced by pop-rock maestro Rob Cavallo, *Fourth World* caused a critical stir, and everyone had high hopes for its success. But significant sales failed to materialize and the band was summarily dropped from its label.

It was a heavy blow for drummer Ryan Dusick, who'd co-founded Kara's Flowers with three high school friends at age sixteen. "After the failure of our first record and tour," Dusick says, "the band's future was very uncertain. Nobody had a clear vision of what the band should do next. We didn't officially break up, but we all went off to college."

Ryan and bassist Mickey Madden enrolled at UCLA, while vocalist Adam Levine and guitarist/keyboardist Jesse Carmichael went to music school in New York. The drummer's pursuit of higher education also included expanding his personal taste from rock and pop to include styles of music that would soon significantly alter the direction of his playing. "I got into Stevie Wonder and old funk records like Herbie Hancock's *Headhunters*, as well as contemporary R&B," Dusick explains. "I'd always played rock music, but I became obsessed with learning these urban grooves."

Three thousand miles away, Dusick's bandmates were under a similar influence. "Adam and Jesse were submerged in urban culture at school on Long Island, and they started listening to a variety of R&B and soul," the drummer says. When Levine and Carmichael returned to LA, the friends regrouped, determined to shift their musical focus away from straight-up rock to embrace the funk/R&B vibe they found so exciting but hadn't yet attempted to play. "We were asking ourselves, How are four white guys going to pull off playing funk?" But it was Ryan's ambitious rethinking of his approach to the drums that ended up steering the band toward its soul/funk destination.



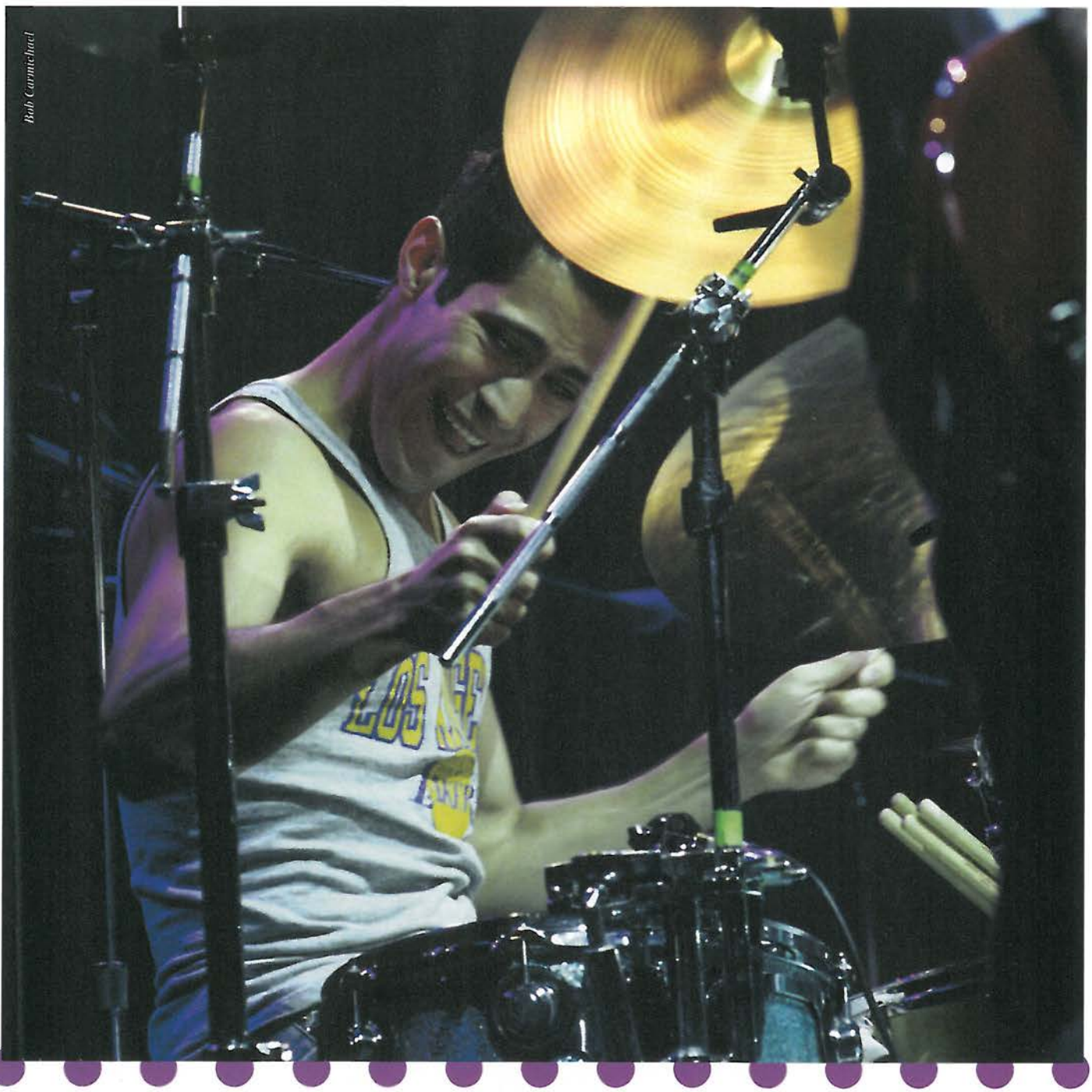
Chris Wray McCann

"The turning point came one day at practice," Dusick says. "We were talking about the song 'Are You That Somebody?' by Aaliyah, which was produced by Timbaland. He'd also produced Missy Elliott, and we thought his beats were just awesome. I said, 'Let's write a song with a beat like that, and I'll do my best impression of a contemporary hip-hop groove, but played by a live band with acoustic drums.' I just started messing around with my impression of a Timbaland beat, which then inspired a piano part for Jesse."

The result was the band's first funk-infused composition, "Not Coming Home." "We'd never been so excited, because it was so different from any song we had ever written before," he says. "It sparked a renaissance in the band." To signify the band's rebirth, and the addition of new guitarist James Valentine, the group changed its name to Maroon 5.

Maroon 5 released its debut, *Songs About Jane*, in June 2002. The popularity of soulful, engaging singles like "This Love," "Hard To Breathe," and "She Will Be Loved" have propelled *Songs About Jane* to multi-platinum sales and have given the band mass-media exposure, making Maroon 5's debut one of pop's most recent success stories.

One thing is certain: Ryan's approach to rock drumming is forever changed. "An important approach I take with this music is to emulate the beats and grooves of my favorite hip-hop producers and combine them with a 'How would John Bonham or Chad Smith play these beats?' mindset. Combining the hard-hitting rock approach to playing hip-hop grooves is my thing. I think I found my own style when I made that combination."



MD: *Songs About Jane* has created a steady buzz for two years, resulting in multiple charting singles, MTV airplay, TV appearances, platinum sales, and sold-out tours. What has this new success been like?

Ryan: I don't think you're ever really prepared for something like this. It changes your life in many ways, especially for our singer, Adam. I definitely feel for him, because his life has changed dramatically. He can't really go out shopping anymore without being hounded. But it's different for drummers. [laughs] There's a built-in anonymity that goes with being behind those cymbals, which is nice because you get the perks of fame without totally becoming public property. I wouldn't want that to change. I'm not the kind of person who would really enjoy being chased in a mall.

MD: You've mentioned being a fan of Stevie Wonder. Stevie, of course, played drums on his albums and is considered to have a unique groove and unorthodox style. Have you studied or attempted to emulate Stevie's grooves?

Ryan: Absolutely, I love his style. For a while we went through this phase where it was like, "Whatever Stevie Wonder did is right." He had this incredible vibe to everything he did. If you watch his video *The Making Of Songs In The Key Of Life*, it's really funny. He'll isolate some of the tracks and say, "There I am knocking over a microphone when I'm trying to hit the tom." [laughs] At times it's a little sloppy, but that's what gives a record character. All of that is okay, as long as the groove is solid. It's just a matter of the foundation being good and the track *feeling* good. It doesn't matter how you get there, as long as it grooves.

MD: How do you go about building a groove?

Ryan: The grooves come from the songs. There's a pop sensibility in us that's a part of whatever we do. That's why what we do works, no matter what kind of groove we're infusing or what style it is. Jesse, our keyboard player, is really a jazz and classical guy. James is a true jazz guitarist. And Adam and I come from a rock background, but we're really into the groove thing. When I started incorporating some of that hip-hop and funk sensibility into my playing, I really found my own style. The pop sensibility of Adam's melodies is what ties it all together.

To us, the song is always king. When we come up with a groove, it's to serve the song, and we peel things away until we have the very essence of what the song is. We usually start with locking up the bass guitar and the kick drum. It's a very hip-hop kind of thing where we want that low-end, 808-like thump. We usually try to think of a very consistent, simple pattern that's interesting and that's just a kick-snare-bass groove.

The biggest influence on our live instrumentation would have to be Herbie Hancock's *Headhunters* album, as far as a funky, simple groove that's really constant, with other things layered on top of it. So many rock bands feel they need to turn the Marshall stack up to ten, hit power chords, and strum throughout the song. That's not guitar playing to me. Instrumentation is about playing off of the other instruments. One thing I most pride myself on as a musician is a knack for arrangement. We're very meticulous when we're building our arrangements, and we do it from the ground up.

MD: What's the role of the drums in Maroon 5? Are you there to spark it and drive the band, or are you expected to support the music and stay out of the way?

Ryan: I think my role in a live performance is to provide a very consistent, hard-hitting groove that stays out of the way of the vocals. We have no illusions about the fact that if you're writing pop songs, people are listening to the melody and lyrics. As long as you do it well, it's a craft just like anything else, and part of the craft is

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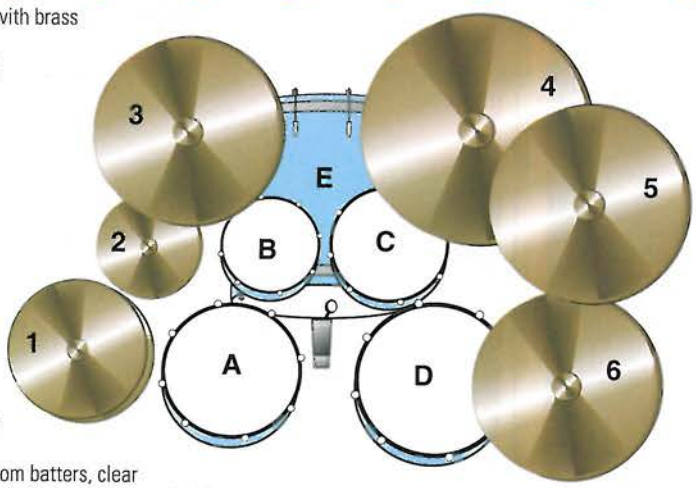

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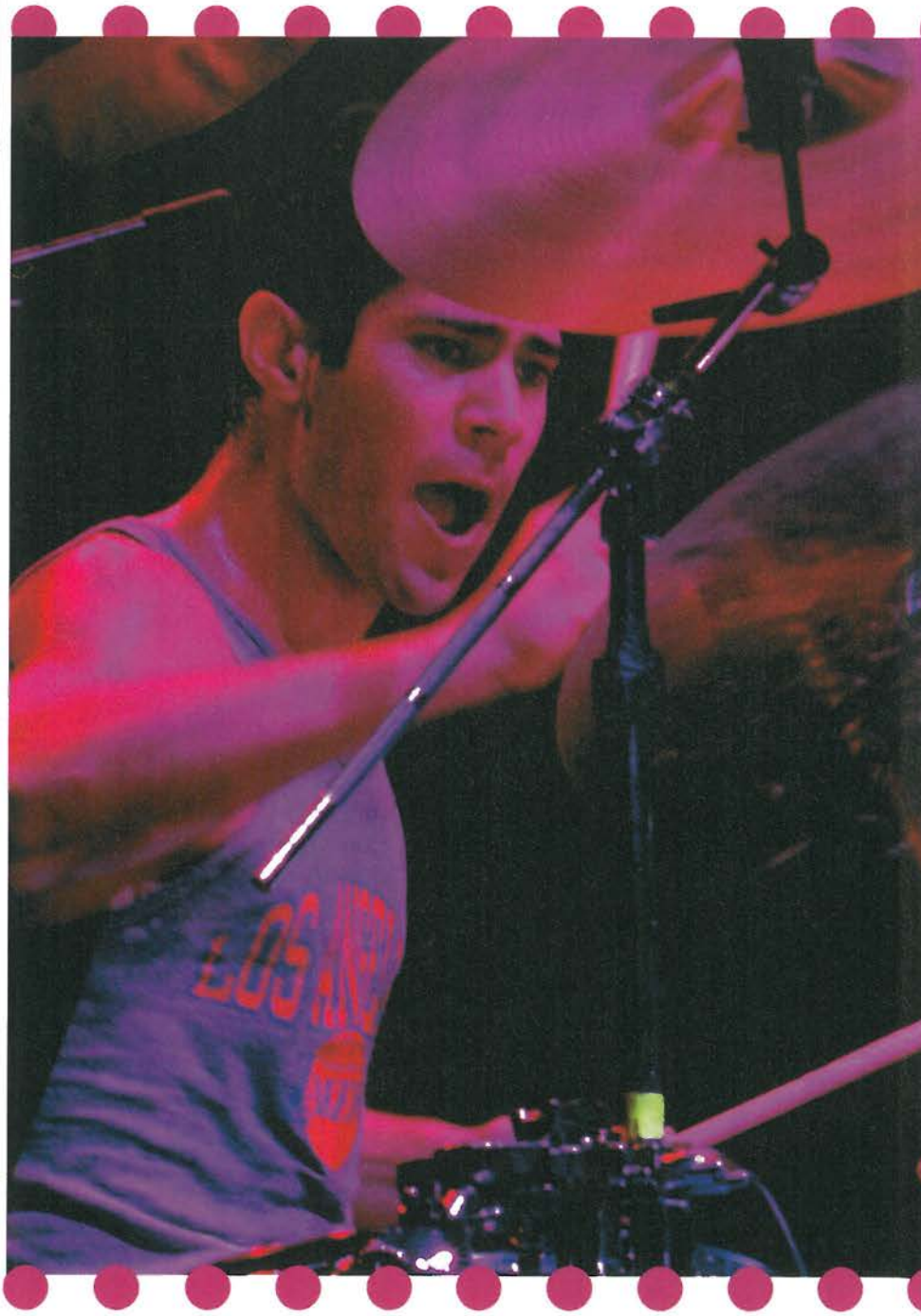
Ryan Dusick

each instrument playing its part in the structure of the song.

For the drums, it's definitely about staying out of the way in a certain regard, but not any more than any other instrument. Some people don't get the less-is-more thing. Most of my favorite players are people who, when they don't play, you notice it just as much as when they do play. It's the space between the notes that makes those notes so special.

MD: Who are some of your favorite drummers?

Ryan: In my high school, we had an orchestra and a pep band. I was in both. In the pep band there were two different kinds of players: the guys who were into Rush, and the guys who were into The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. There was this ongoing debate between the two sides, which was Neil Peart versus Ringo. [laughs] You're either a Neil Peart guy or a Ringo guy, and I have to say I'm a Ringo guy. He had such a simple, beautiful groove that fit the songs so well, and that goes along with my sensibilities as a musician. I'm always in awe of people who can do those acrobatics, but I would never put

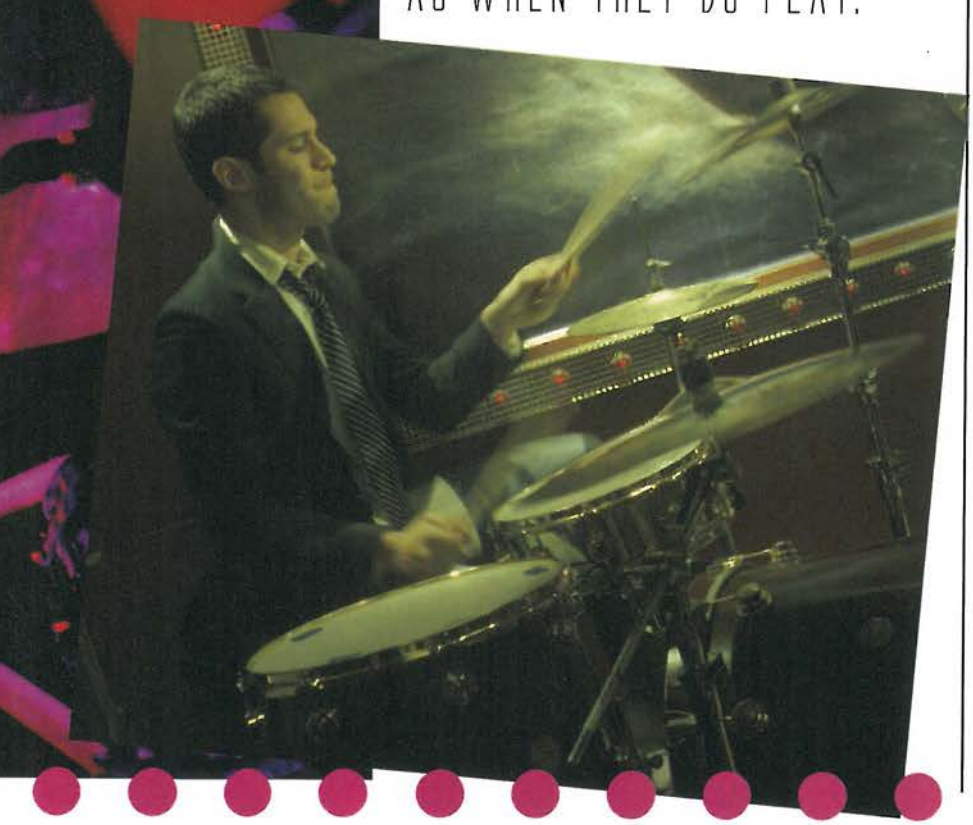


that into a song. My favorite drummers are players who are really inventive within the context of a song, as far as playing with space and infusing different styles into rock or pop.

I started playing drums in 1990, so my first heroes were the early-'90s alternative rock gods. Chad Smith from The Chili Peppers was one of my first drum heroes. I just loved his really hard-hitting, funky beats. It drove to the heart of the two things I like most in music: rocking out and playing a groove. I felt the same way about Dave Abbruzzese when he was with Pearl Jam. When I started getting more into funk, I found Harvey Mason, who played on the *Headhunters* record. The drumming on that album is some of my all-time favorite. And I *love* ?uestlove's playing on D'Angelo's *Voodoo*, as well as his work with The Roots.

We played a show with The Roots in Birmingham, Alabama, so I got to sit on the side of the stage for their set and watch ?uestlove play. Talk about groove—he couldn't miss a beat if you punched him in the face. [laughs] He was tuning his snare, fixing mic' stands, having a conversation

"SOME PEOPLE DON'T GET THE LESS-IS-MORE THING. MOST OF MY FAVORITE PLAYERS ARE PEOPLE WHO, WHEN THEY DON'T PLAY, YOU NOTICE IT JUST AS MUCH AS WHEN THEY DO PLAY."



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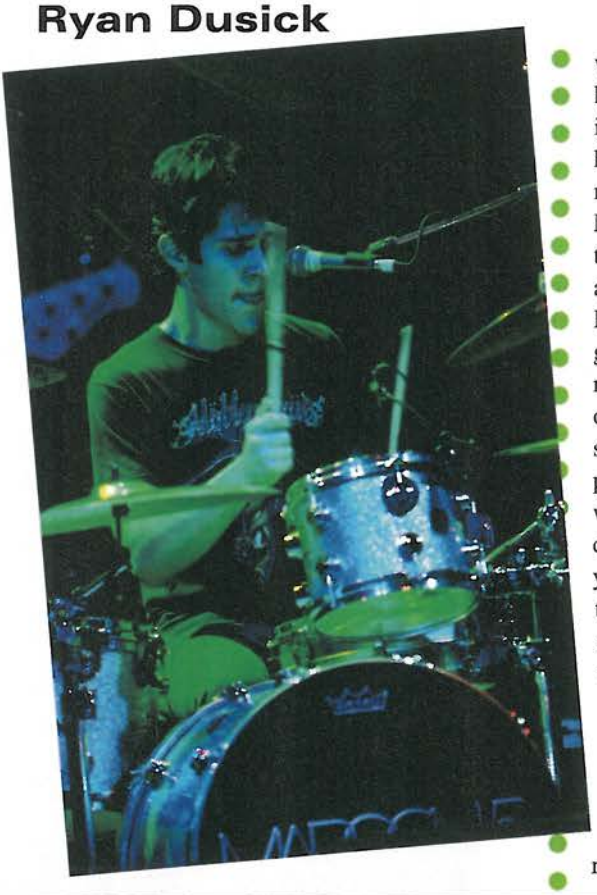


with his tech, chewing gum, fixing his hair, all at the same time keeping the *sickest* beat you've ever heard. It was ridiculous. And he never plays fills! I just love that.

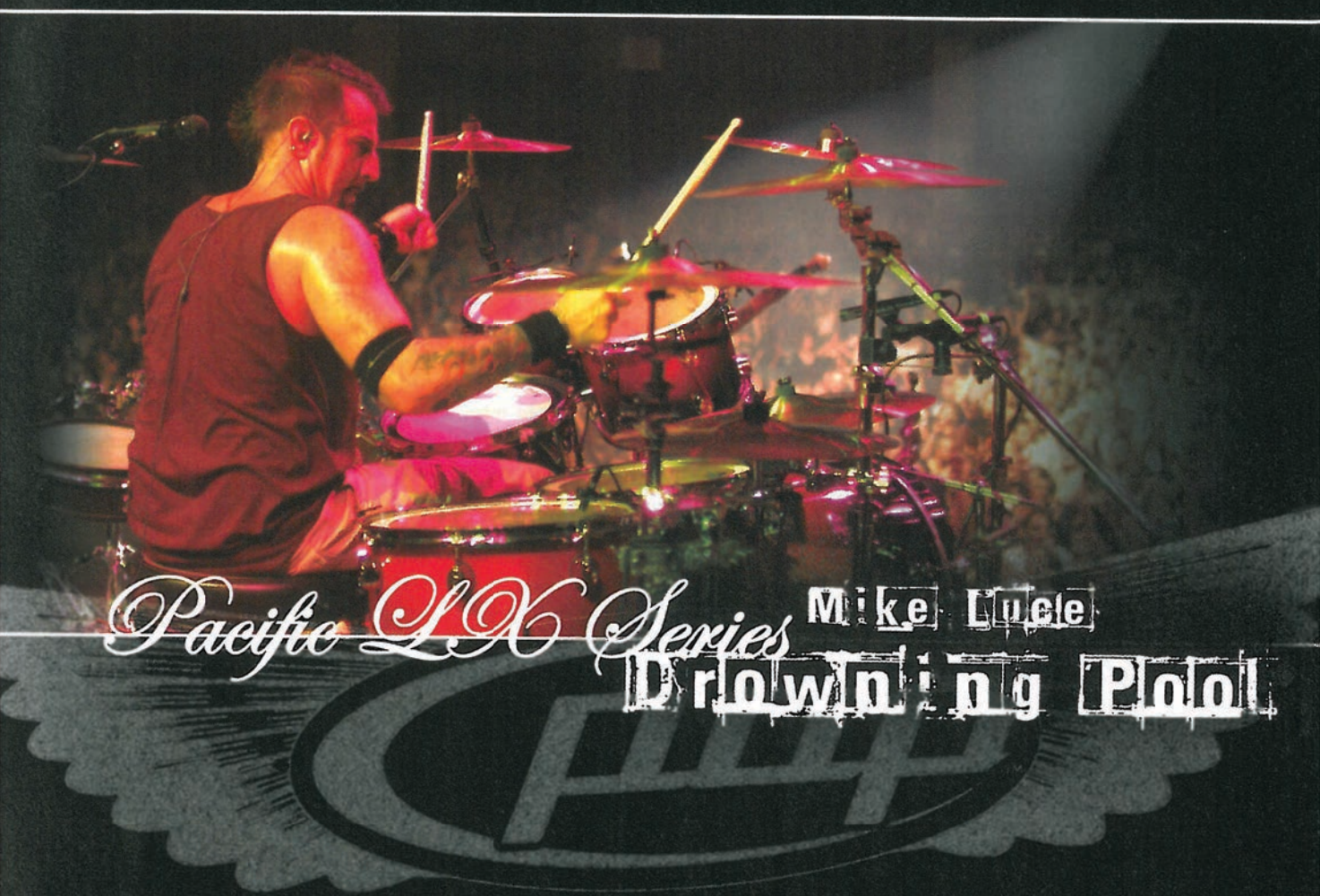
MD: Could you offer *MD* readers tips on how to groove, lay it down, and make beats feel good?

Ryan: I started to really find my groove when, while listening to a record with a really good groove on it, I tried to emulate that groove specifically—not just play the parts, but also really *listen* to where the parts sit in the track. You can play along to a metronome, you can hit the snare drum right on the backbeat every time, and you can hit the hi-hat precisely, but that doesn't mean the groove is going to feel good. You have to start moving things around a little bit. When you hear something that feels good—feeling the kick drum lay back a little bit and really tuning in to where it sits in the groove—that's how you develop a good feel. Start playing around with it, be creative, and try to come up with new grooves yourself *based* on that.

For me, it was very helpful to play along to hip-hop grooves. This is going to sound funny, but I'd often play along to Mystikal's "Shake Ya Ass," which was produced by The Neptunes. That has such a funky, sick, almost James Brown–like laid-back groove, but so sparse—it's just a kick and a shaker. There's not even a hi-hat or a snare. Listening to where the kick drum lays in that track and how it's kind of laid back was really a good lesson for me.

MD: Switching gears for a moment, I understand that you had to take a break from the band recently due to an injury.

Ryan: I originally injured my shoulder and elbow from playing baseball in high school. It was some kind of chronic tendinitis that never completely healed, but didn't really affect me beyond not being able to throw a ball the way I used to. I never felt any pain while playing the



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drums, but sometimes I didn't have as much stamina as I wanted, or I'd find myself getting a little sloppier towards the end of a set. That was frustrating, but it never hindered my playing much until we started touring constantly, going from one tour into another with few breaks.

Last fall, we went from our first European tour straight into our first real headlining tour of the States, and I knew I shouldn't do it. I was coming off the stage in such pain that my hand was shaking and I couldn't grip a pen. I played through it, but if you watch any video shot toward the end of 2003 or any of our TV appearances at that time, I have a very strange posture and you can tell I'm in pain.

By May of 2004, it really started affecting my ability to perform. We had a band meeting where I said that I needed to take time off to recover. Doctors discovered that I had thoracic outlet syndrome, which means the nerves affecting the use of my arm are trapped in my shoulder. I also have chronic tendinitis in my shoulder and elbow from playing injured for so long. A lot of the beats I play involve one-handed 16th notes on the hi-hat, where I'm constantly playing. When you do that nightly for ninety minutes, plus soundcheck, it adds up. So I knew I needed to take a break, rest, and go for physical therapy. Thankfully, it's working.

MD: Matt Flynn, who's played with The B-52's and Gavin DeGraw, sat in as your replacement on the recent tour. From watching him play your grooves every night, have you gained any insight on how to improve as a drummer?

Ryan: Matt was the first guy we found who could hit hard *and* play with a good swing. He's also a really nice guy, and he was consistent with the vibe that we wanted. It's always interesting to see a different approach to drumming and compare it against your own instincts. It definitely gives me some insight. I've learned a lot, and there are many things I'll be more conscious of when we're performing, as far as just what feels good.

MD: Since Maroon 5 plays so many different types and sizes of venues, do the acoustics in these different spaces affect your sound and your ability to find your groove?

Ryan: We definitely have to talk about whether we need bigger amps for outdoor gigs and what kind of cymbals I need. Often, a tight little drumkit with small dimensions and little splashy cymbals can fill up a small club really well. But when you get on stage in an arena, or you're at the back listening, it just ends up sounding tinny and small. You need some big John Bonham crashes and a fat kick drum to get the low end that will really push the subwoofers. You have to make adjustments like that, and in a lot of ways we're just learning about that kind of stuff.

We're obviously used to playing clubs, and we're familiar with being in the studio. But being on stage in a large outdoor amphitheater or an arena is fairly new to us. We started that in the summer of 2003, opening up for Matchbox Twenty and John Mayer. At the start of 2005 we'll be doing our first headlining arena tour, which will be a whole different animal. We'll be carrying our own production. We'll have our own sound system, monitors—and catering! [laughs] It's definitely a bit daunting to imagine that much production going into our little show. But it's the next step, so that's where we're going.

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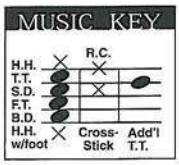
Reading Basics

Part 6: Triplets

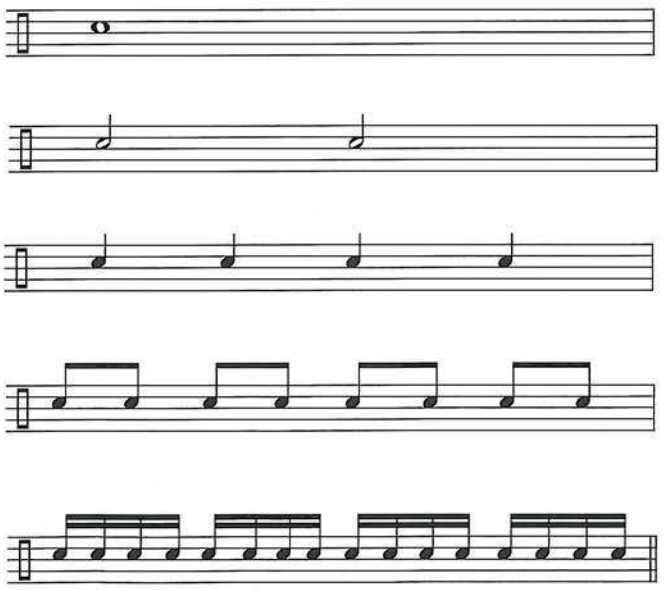
by Kelly Paletta

"Mexico, Mexico, Mexico, Mexico...."



In this month's lesson on reading basics, we'll explore the world of triplets. A review will help us get started. Remember the table of time from a few lessons back? It's reprinted below to illustrate the relationship between 16th notes, 8th notes, quarter notes, half notes, and whole notes. Looking at the table, you can see that the notation system favors groups of two, four, eight, sixteen, and so on. Quarter notes are articulated at twice the speed of half notes. Eighth notes are articulated at twice the speed of quarter notes. Sixteenth notes are articulated at twice the speed of 8th notes. Everything lines up nicely.

1



But what if you want to divide time up into uneven groupings? Suppose that you want to play three notes in the space that is normally occupied by two 8th notes? The convention of adding and removing flags won't help us here. There is no consideration for groups of three, five, six, or seven in that method. To notate these values we need to create an artificial grouping (sometimes called an odd grouping).

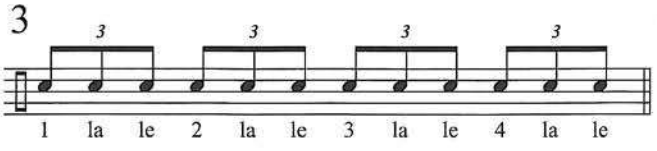
Artificial groupings of three are called triplets. A group of three 8th notes in the space of two is called an 8th-note triplet. Check out Example 2 to see what this looks like.

2

The number "3" above the group of notes indicates that these three notes fit into the space that is normally occupied by two. What do triplets sound like? Remember the first drum fill in The Clash's hit "London Calling," or the final measures of Peter Gabriel's "The Rhythm Of The Heat"? Those are triplets.

The 1e&a song does not line up with 8th-note triplets, so we need a new counting song. There are several methods. Some people count triplets this way: "1-trip-let, 2-trip-let, 3-trip-let, 4-trip-let," or "1-duh-la, 2-duh-la...," or the ambiguous "Mexico, Mexico, Mexico, Mexico." I prefer this:

3



Sometimes 8th-note triplets include rests. For example:

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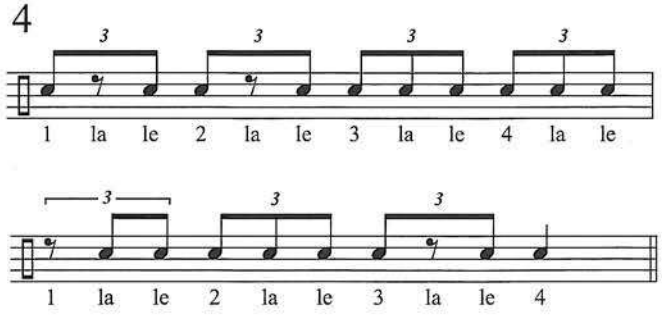
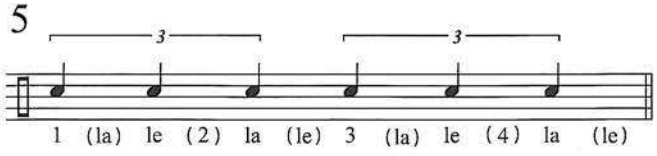


Now let's discuss quarter-note triplets. These are three notes in the space normally occupied by two quarter notes. The very last phrase in The Beatles' version of "Twist And Shout" is composed of quarter-note triplets. Each individual note in the quarter-note triplet grouping occupies the space of two syllables in the 1-la-le song. Here's an example:

5



Sometimes quarter notes and 8th notes are combined in triplet groupings.

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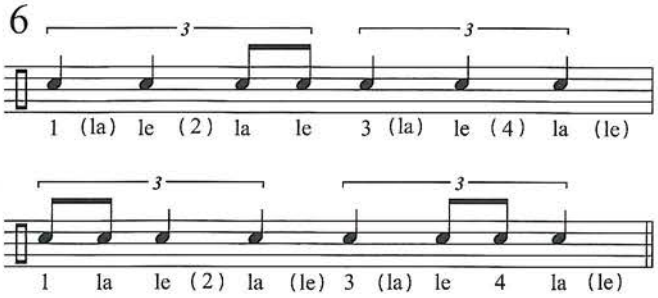
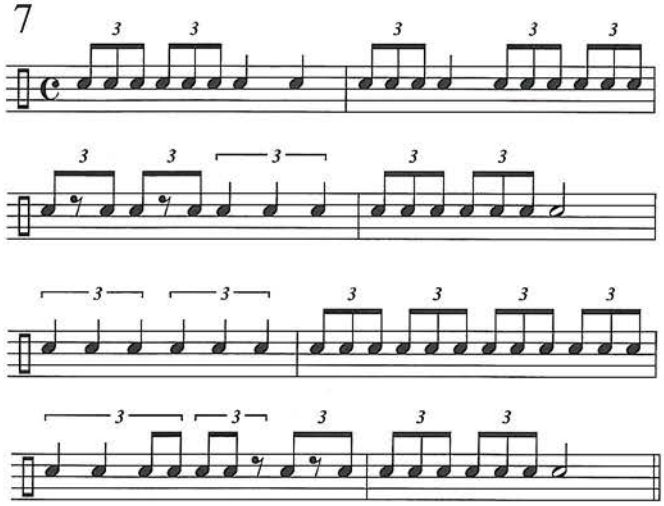


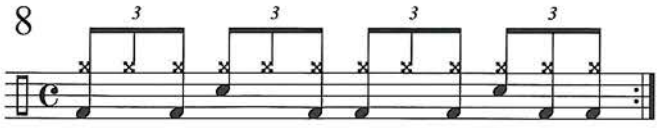
Here's a short snare drum piece that includes 8th-note and quarter-note triplets.

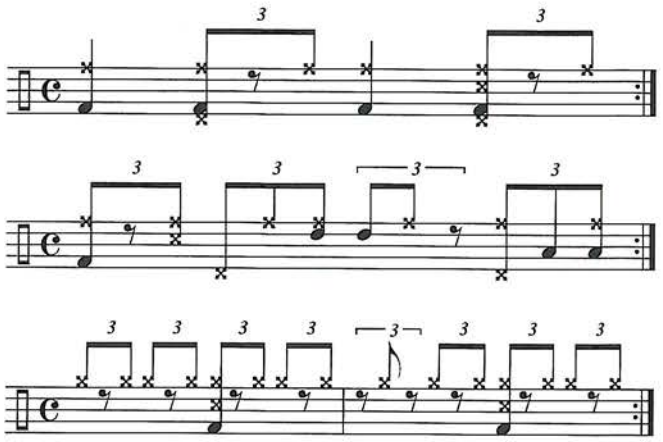
7



Here are a few grooves in various styles that include 8th-note triplets.

8





Here's a short solo that includes triplets orchestrated around the drumset.

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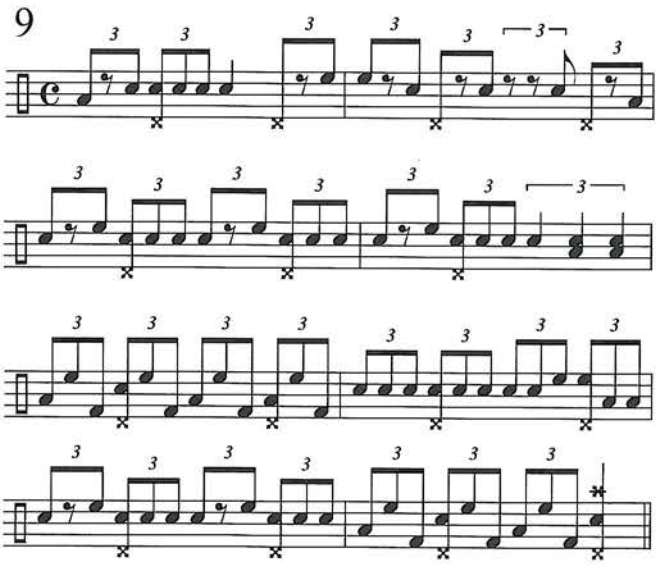

For more practice at reading triplet-based patterns, check out *The Art Of Bop Drumming* and *Beyond Bop Drumming* by John Riley, *Art Blakey's Jazz Messages* by John Ramsay, and *Advanced Techniques For The Modern Drummer* by Jim Chapin.

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Double Bass Beats

Part 3: Non-Continuous Foot Patterns

by Rod Morgenstein

My previous two articles (in the December '04 and January '05 issues) involved various hand patterns played over continuous, alternating RLRL 16th notes, triplets, and sextuplets on the bass drums. This month's focus is on non-continuous 16th- and 8th-note patterns in the feet.

These exercises will help increase independence between your limbs while also opening up a world of syncopated double bass grooves.

In the following examples, the tempo will ultimately determine whether you should play a quarter-note or 8th-note ride pattern. But experiment with both (as indicated). Also, be sure to play all quarter and 8th notes notated on the bass drums with your "main" foot and all upbeat 16th notes ("e" and "ah") with your other foot.

In examples 1–12, the snare plays on the backbeats.

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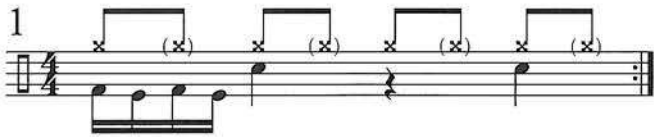

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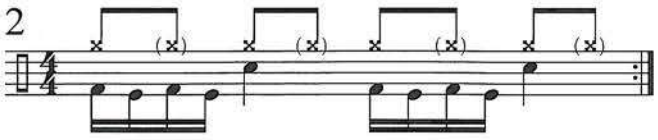

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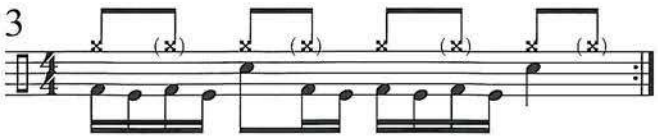

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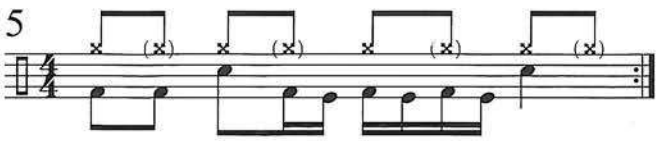

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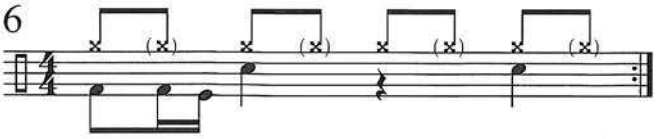

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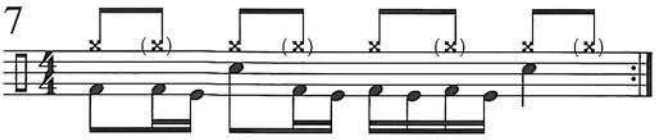

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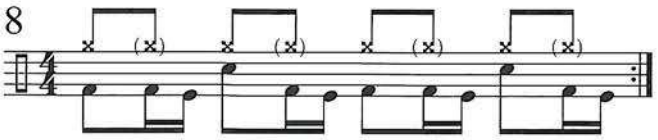

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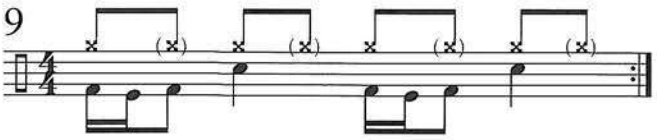

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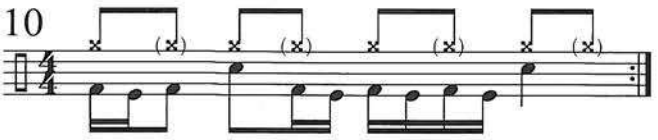

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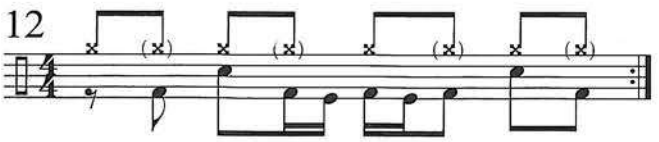
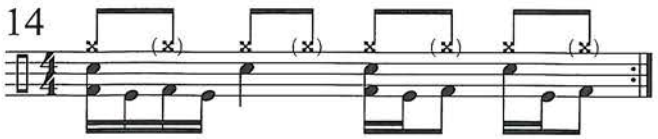


In examples 13 and 14, the snare plays on all four quarter notes.

13

14

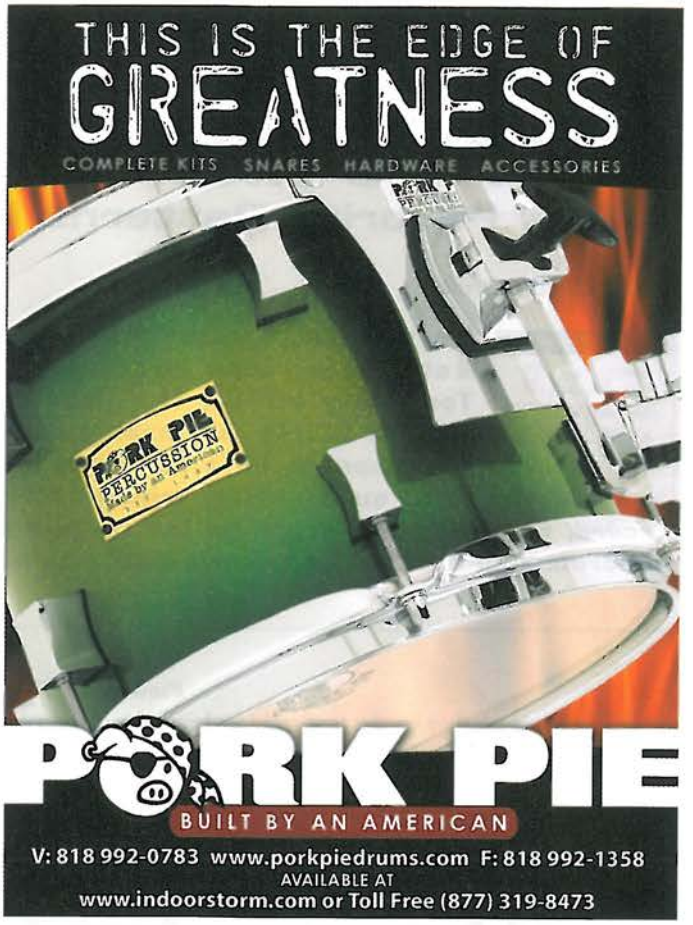


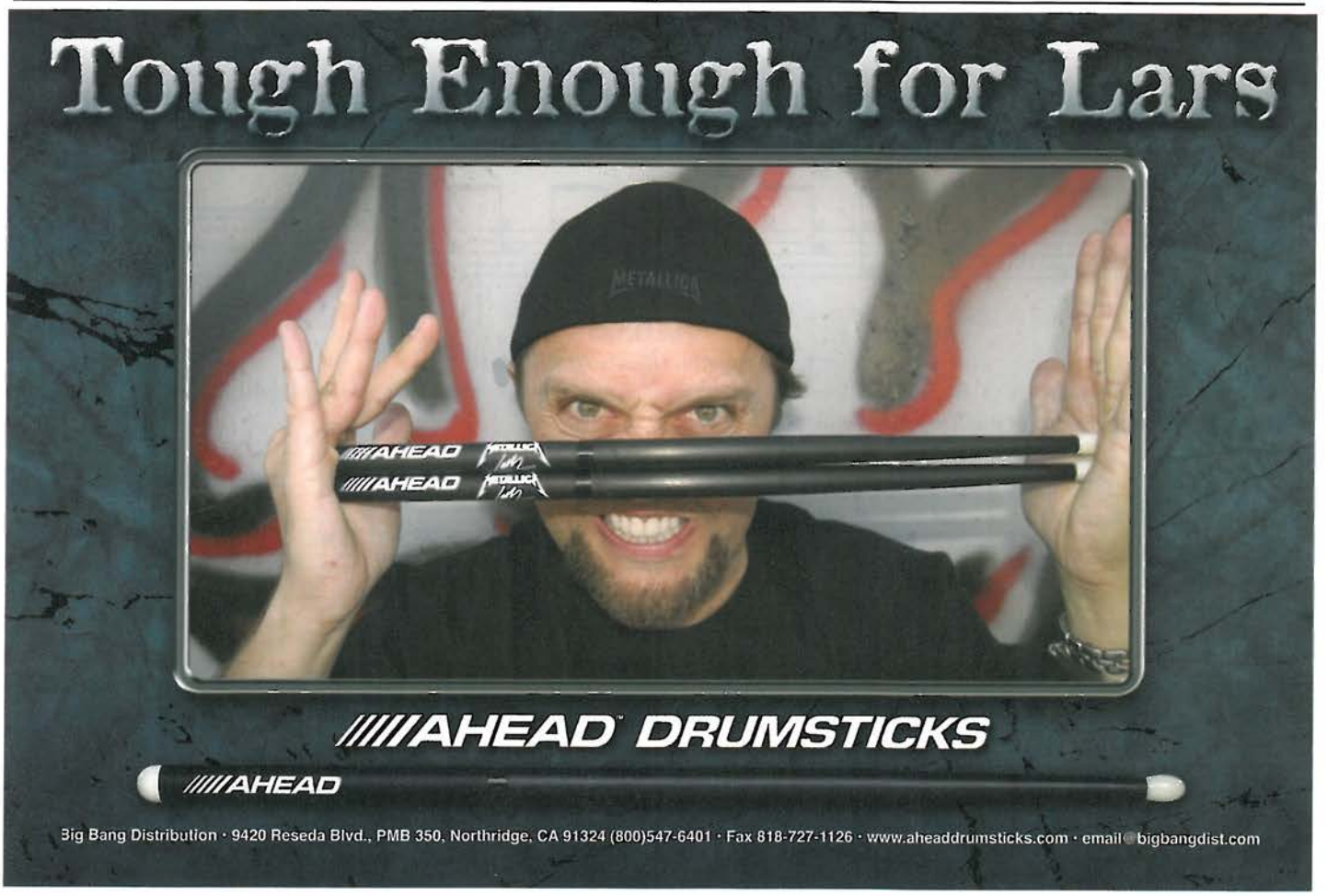
Now, in examples 15 and 16, the snare plays on beat 3, creating a half-time feel.

15

16

Next month we'll displace the snare to create some interesting and funky licks. See you then!





Odd-Time Hits

A Few Favorite Patterns From The Past

by Ed Breckenfeld

In the past few years of our *Off The Record* column, we've witnessed a steady increase in the popularity of odd time signatures. Bands like Tool (June 2002), The Mars Volta (January 2004), and A Perfect Circle (March 2004) are making odd times feel as common as 4/4. While this may seem to be a distinctly modern trend, several adventuresome bands have successfully mined this territory before. In this special *Off The Record*, we thought it might be fun to gain a little historical perspective by looking at the drumming on some of the odd-time hits of the past.

"Money"

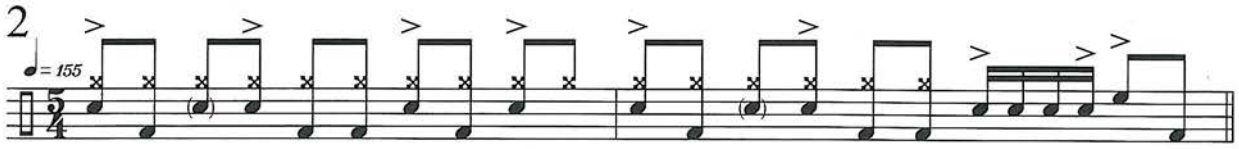
Pink Floyd, *The Dark Side Of The Moon*

Nick Mason's crashes on the first and last beat of each measure smoothly disguise the 7/4 time signature in this single from one of the most beloved rock albums of all time. Like many odd-time grooves, the beat simply follows the song's guitar riff. (0:26)

"Living In The Past"

Jethro Tull, *Living In The Past*

This early-'70s hit employs a 5/4 rhythm similar to the classic "Mission Impossible" theme. Drummer Clive Bunker follows the bass guitar riff while embellishing the groove with some extra bass drums and a few well-placed ghost notes. (0:27)



"The Ocean"

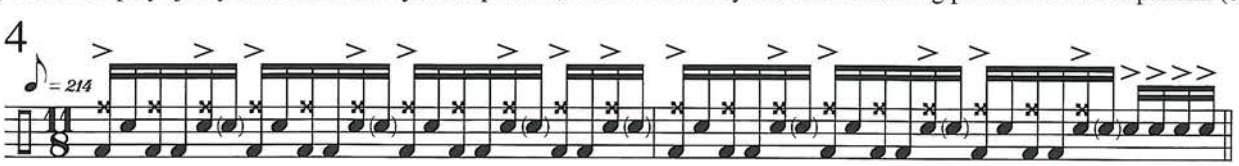
Led Zeppelin, *Houses Of The Holy*

7/8 time is one 8th note shy of 4/4, which allows the two time signatures to work well together. John Bonham's artful and oh-so-quiet ghost notes enhance the feel of this Zeppelin classic. (0:13)

"Whipping Post"

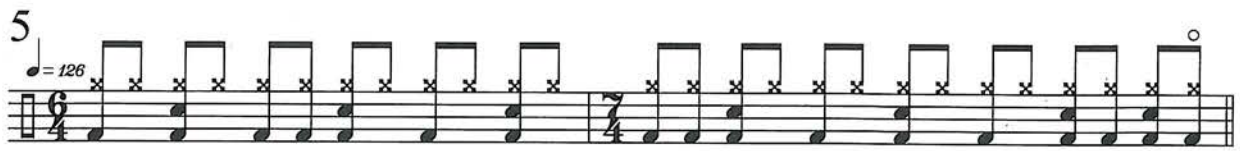
The Allman Brothers Band At Fillmore East

You won't find many rock tunes in *eleven*. At the end of the intro of this classic, The Allmans' dual drummers are working magic. As Jai Johanny Johanson plays jazzy snare rolls and cymbal splashes, Butch Trucks lays down this flowing paradiddle-diddle pattern. (0:33)



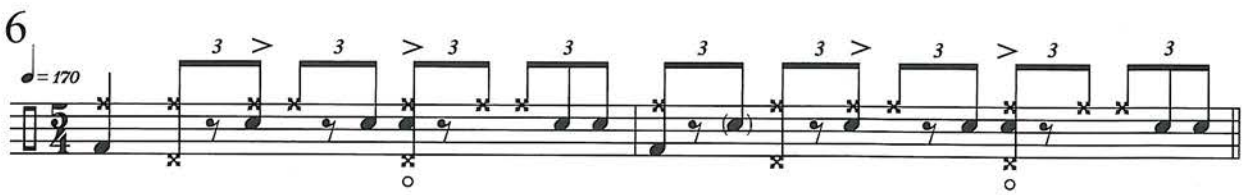
"Turn It On Again"
Genesis, *Duke*

This hit single for art-rockers Genesis revolves around a compound time signature. Phil Collins' driving bass drum part propels the alternating 6/4–7/4 groove. (0:36)



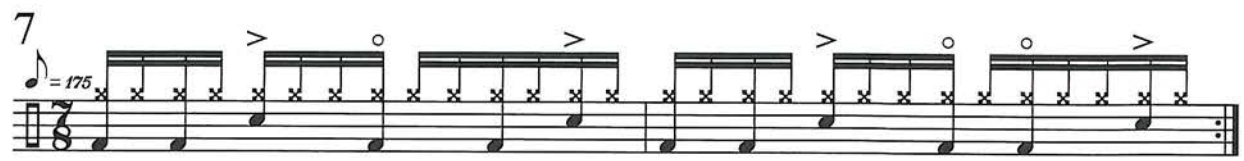
"Take Five"
Dave Brubeck, *Time Out*

Here's Joe Morello's opening drum beat from Dave Brubeck's famous 5/4 jazz hit. Notice how the wonderful snare work ties the pattern together and helps take the "oddness" out of the odd time.



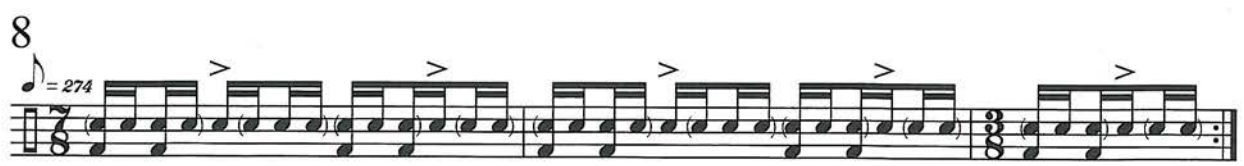
"Tom Sawyer"
Rush, *Moving Pictures*

This Rush hit starts in 4/4 and then switches to 7/8 halfway through. By moving one bass drum a 16th note over and adding a second open hi-hat, Neil Peart gets a completely different feeling out of the two measures of his 7/8 pattern. (1:38)



"Changes"
Yes, *90125*

The intro of this track is a confounding compound time signature, which I've divided into 7, 7, and 3. Alan White's non-accented snare notes are barely audible, but add to the flow of the groove. (0:34)



You can contact Ed Breckenfeld through his Web site at www.edbreckenfeld.com.

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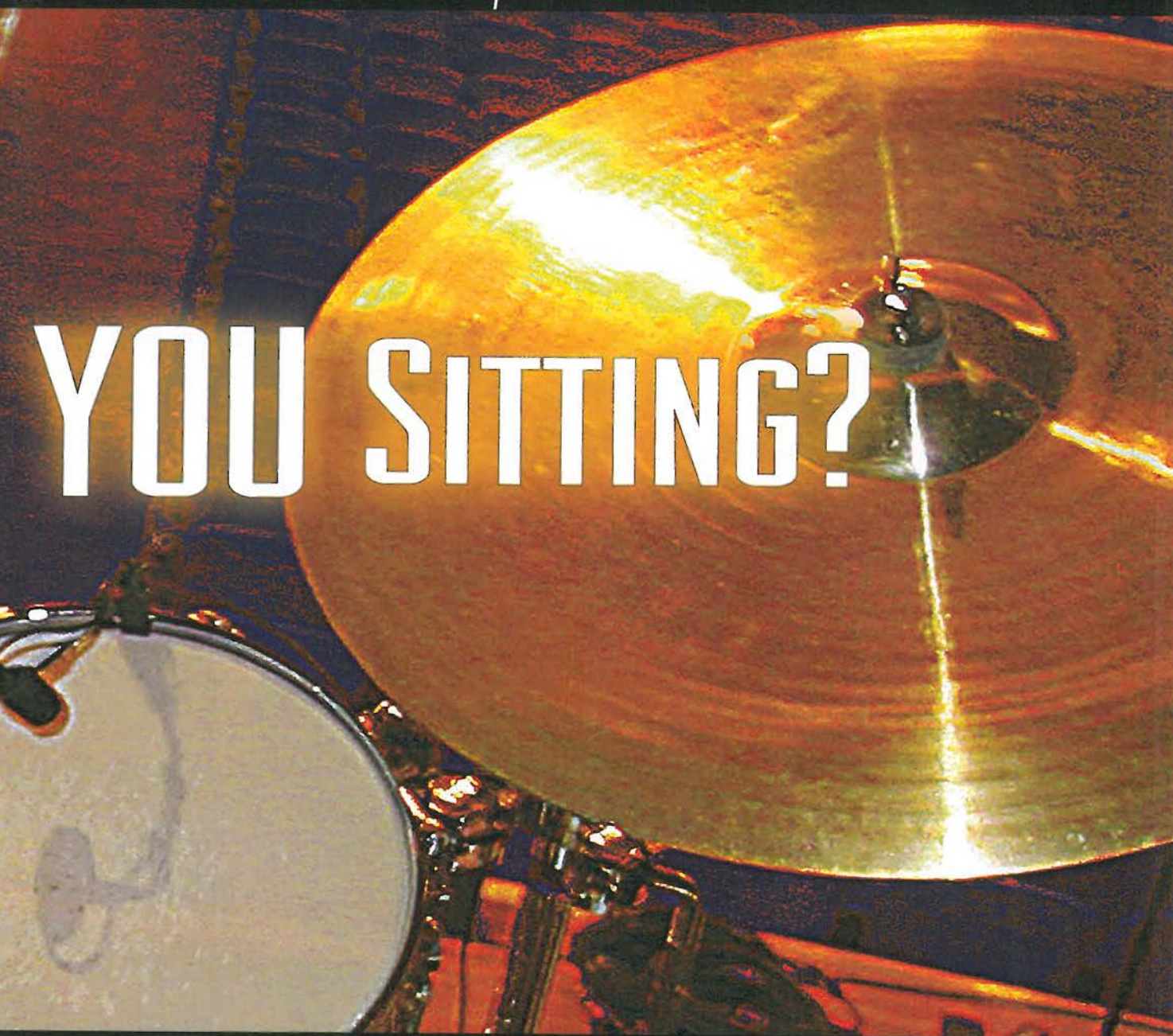

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Terreon Gully

On The Rise

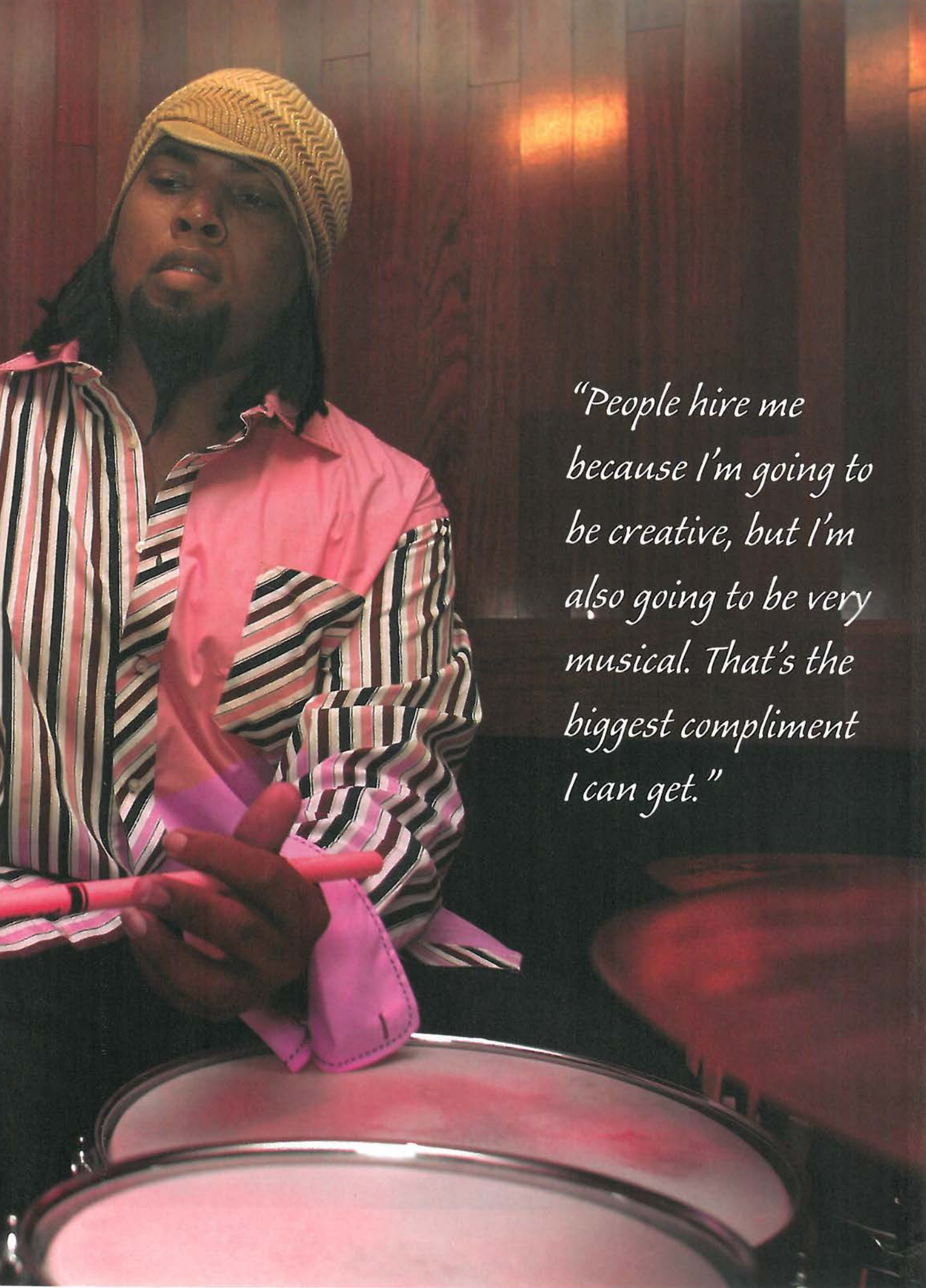
(And Burning Down The House)

Fifteen years ago the straight-ahead jazz world was overpopulated with young drummers aping their 1950s heroes. Tradition was in, fusion was out; suits were all the rage, and whatever your approach, leave the personality at home. But all that has changed.

Today, charismatic jazzbos on all instruments are creating exciting music that slams against boundaries and breaks the rules. These vibrant bands record prolifically and perform around the globe, combining jazz standards with flavors of funk, fusion, and world music, creating new sounds that embrace the past while blasting it into the future.

Story by Ken Micallef

Photos by Paul La Raia


"People hire me because I'm going to be creative, but I'm also going to be very musical. That's the biggest compliment I can get."

Thirty-one-year-old Terreon Gully is part of a growing cadre of drummers involved in this demanding time warp. His stylistic inclusion of everyone from Sonny Greer and Vinnie Colaiuta to Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez reveals his prescient mindset (not to mention his often riotous technique). On a handful of adventurous recordings, including Stefon Harris & Blackout's *Evolution*, The Christian McBride Band's *Vertical Vision*, Yerba Buena's *President Alien*, Jacques Schwarz-Bart's *Brother Jacques*, Russell Gunn's *Smoking Gunn*, and Marc Cary's *Rhodes Ahead*, Gully balances his fierce fusion approach with refreshing sparks of individualism. Combining a thorough knowledge of big band and swing styles with tinges of drum 'n' bass, funk, and indigenous ethnic drumming, Gully is unique. If ever "float like a butterfly and sting like a bee" described a musician, it seems written for Gully.

While he often drives harrowing grooves at low volumes with simmering intensity, Gully will also whack his four-tom array with a fury bordering on the maniacal. He gives his all, whether the gig requires brushes, a simple beat, the classical conception of a Stefon Harris track, or the fantastic ferocity of Christian McBride's "Technicolor Nightmare" (one of Gully's personal favorites). His work with Yerba Buena reveals another side of his trick bag, with percussion-laced, stomping grooves that are all about moving the booty in 4/4 time.

Simply known as "Tank" to his friends, this drummer has all the power of an Abrams fighting vehicle, infused with the deadly accuracy of digital technology.

MD: Your drumming really *speaks*. You play very dynamically, often dropping explosive tom accents over a burning groove. How did you develop your control and dynamics?

Terreon: When I attended Lincoln Senior High School in East St. Louis, we listened to Count Basie and Duke Ellington. Our director, Ron Carter [not the famed bassist] always talked about playing soft, but intense. That's my main concept today. When I moved to New York in 1998 I did some restaurant gigs where I played my style, but extremely fast and extremely soft. That's where I developed a lot of control and the ability to play at different dynamic levels.

MD: Did you play a lot of restaurant gigs?

Terreon: That lasted for maybe two months. I didn't do gigs just to make money. I came here with a mission to be working with people I wanted to play with. Some of my first gigs were with Bobby Watson, then with Abbey Lincoln. That's when I began working and traveling.

MD: How did you get your dynamics together?

Terreon: I used to practice playing the ride cymbal and hi-hat with a metronome—extremely slow, and at different dynamic levels. People want to know how I play the ride cymbal so fast. It's because I learned to play it really, really slow. Playing it slow helps you to develop the muscles and control that you need to play fast. Playing soft and using the concept of playing through the ride cymbal, aiming right past the cymbal—that's more for the sound. When you play through the cymbal you get a certain sound. Blakey and Tony Williams used to play through the cymbal.

MD: How do you play "through the cymbal"?

Terreon: Like if you're throwing a dart at the wall, but you're actually trying to go through the wall and aiming right past the wall. It's a concept.

MD: On "Precious Ones" [from Christian McBride's *Vertical Vision*] you play very fast on the ride cymbal for just a moment. Most drummers learn to play fast ride cymbal patterns by slowly increasing the metronome marking.

Terreon: When most drummers try to play fast, they take all their fingers off the stick and it's just bouncing on the cymbal. I teach people to keep their fingers on the stick; that will give you more control and the ability to play faster.

MD: After you practiced playing slow, would you then advance the metronome?

Terreon: It's a measured process. But the most important thing was getting the concept of playing slow and then gradually faster. It began with my playing soft and quiet, but still intense.

MD: On many of the songs you've recorded, like "Red-Bone Nettie-Bone" from Stefon Harris's *Evolution*, you play very intensely but with a lightness of touch. Does that come from studying classical technique in college?

Terreon: That's part of it. But it comes more from listening and trying to figure out what is necessary. Later in that song I'm playing the clave on the cowbell with my left foot.

MD: There's a lot of independence in that song to begin with, so that's impressive. How did you develop all your independence?

Terreon: When I was at the University Of Houston in 1990, my professor, Marvin Sparks, introduced me to Afro-Cuban and African rhythms, as well as to music from other continents. I play timbales, cajon, and

Terreon's Traps

Drums: Premier Series (maple shell) kit in burnt orange lacquer finish
A. 6x10 snare drum (Modern Classic birch shell)
B. 6x14 snare drum (Modern Classic maple shell)
C. 7x8 tom
D. 8x10 tom
E. 9x12 tom
F. 13x15 tom
G. 18x20 bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian
1. 15" HHX Groove hats
2. 16" HHXtreme crash
3. 18" HHXtreme crash
4. 22" HHX Manhattan ride
5. 16" HH Sound Control crash with one rivet
6. 22" HHXtreme crash
7. 18" HHX Evolution O-Zone crash

Hardware: Premier
Heads: Remo Emperor batters, clear Diplomat bottoms
Sticks: Pro-Mark 718 Acid Jazz model (hickory with wood tip)

congas. Learning to play those instruments and hold the parts down develops independence. The more you play, the more you try to do with each limb.

MD: How did you practice the left-foot cowbell clave?

Terreon: Back in '94 I was at the World Percussion Festival at Berklee, where I met El Negro. Each day he'd show me different ways of playing the clave and the cascara. The biggest lesson I got from him was seeing the way he played the clave. Anyone can play the pattern, but there are very few people who can play it where it sounds good and feels good. The way he played the clave is comparable to how Sonny Payne played with Basie and how that band swung. It's a totally different feeling. I can't play all the stuff in between the clave like El Negro can, but I am listening to bata and rhumba music and learning the language. That's how I approach all the styles: Get the whole concept of the music, not just the beats.

MD: Sometimes you'll repeat phrases so that the part almost sounds like a sample.

Terreon: I came up playing drums in the Bible Fellowship Apostolic Church in East St. Louis. We played a lot of vamps to create tension and emotion. That's a derivative of African tribal rhythms, where you play one pattern over and over. My concept involves repeating one pattern to give the soloist a bed on which to create. And I'm also influenced by a lot of drum 'n' bass.

MD: Part of the reason your drumming sounds so dynamic is the way you tune the toms. They're tuned far apart from the first to the last tom.

Terreon: I do that for effect, to sound like samplers—although it depends on the song and the music. I use different toms on live gigs, usually a 10" and a 14". I try to make colors with the toms. I get the drums to sing and ring. I only use Remo Emperor heads on all my recordings, which a lot of people can't believe. But those heads give me a certain feel as well as a certain sound.

MD: You play with some very forward-thinking jazz musicians. Is there a collective goal among them?

Terreon: With Christian McBride we could do straight-ahead and work all the time. But that's not what he's feeling right now. We listen to everything from Rush and Yes to Weather Report, Steely Dan, and Sting. Those are our standards. Sting recorded a song on *Vertical Vision*, but it didn't make the album. My goal has always been to be an all-around drummer, like Steve Smith. He played great rock with Journey, then all this great jazz and fusion since. I always looked up to him.

When I listened to jazz, I called it all fusion, because a radio station near me used to play Art Blakey, then Yellowjackets, then Duke Ellington. It was a fusion of everything, and all of it was jazz to me. I think everything is equally important. I want to make everything I play sound authentic. My goal is to put everything that I'm listening to right now into the music.

MD: How old were you when you began drumming?

Terreon: I started playing on buckets before I could walk. I was playing funk or gospel in church by the time I got to high school. I listened to all the music from the '70s, as well as the pocket of Dennis Chambers for funk, and fusion techniques from Vinnie Colaiuta and Steve Smith. I always wondered why drummers used all these different cymbals until I heard Vinnie on John Patitucci's *On The Corner*. I wore that record out. With some drummers, the cymbals sound exactly the same. The way Vinnie played the cymbals made sense. It's important for me to make the cymbals become another instrument of the drumset versus something that you just crash and ride on.

MD: Who were your straight-ahead jazz heroes?

Terreon: Early on, Sonny Payne and Sonny Greer. Sonny Greer had a tremendous touch on the drums. His hand would be one place and you couldn't tell what he was hitting with the other. Watching him play drums on old footage is like watching a conductor. And Sonny Payne had some incredible big band fills. The way he filled up the Basie band was different from the way other drummers did before him. After those guys, I was introduced to Art Blakey's *Night In Tunisia*. That was very influential.

MD: Did you study privately in East St. Louis?

Terreon: No, I'm pretty much self-taught. Some people helped me with concepts. In 1992 I attended the United States Percussion Camp. A lot of people taught there, like Marvin Sparks, Ndugu Chancler, and Bubba Bryant. I'd take a Latin class, a timpani class, a marimba class, and a drumset class. That really helped me to see what else was out there.

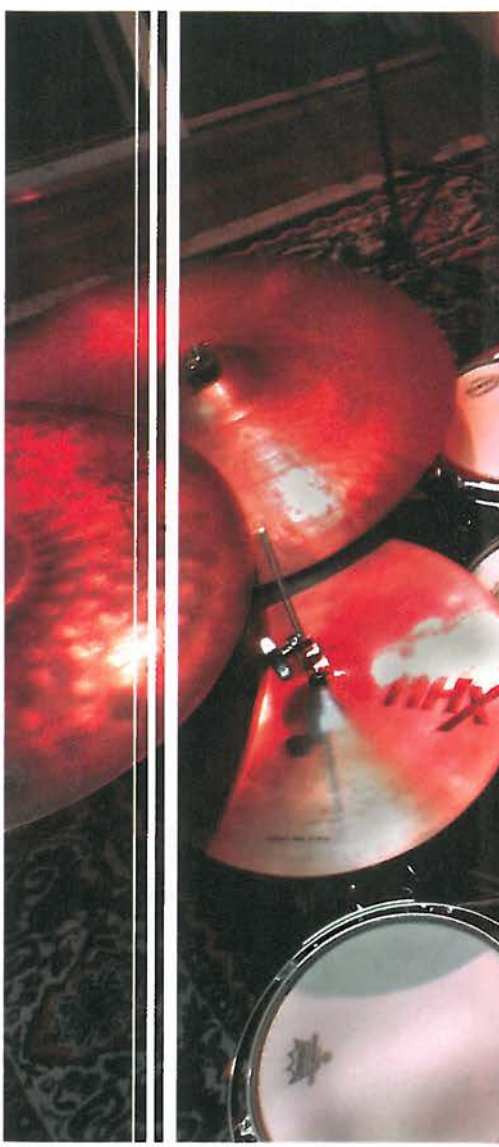
MD: Do you practice for hours on end?

Terreon: Not as much as I'd like to. For me it's mainly listening. In high school, I played in a marching band where the snare drum was mostly 2 and 4. When I was in college, I played in drum corps–style marching band. The snare drum music was a whole *page* full of notes. I hadn't done that, so I was really far behind. I had to play catch-up.

MD: What did you do?

Terreon: I would use my ears to figure out what the other drummers were playing. But at the same time I was learning how to read all that heavy drum stuff on the page.

MD: Did you have to physically work out



the stickings?

Terreon: Oh yeah. It all happened at the same time because I was so far behind.

MD: In drum corps playing, the sticking is high off the head. But your sticking sounds very close to the head.

Terreon: It's a combination of both. In drum corps the whole thing was about everybody trying to play as one. Everybody had to listen and have the same amount of control. I use a lot of wrists and try to keep my hands centered. I use my wrists to move around the set. In drum corps we would play 16th notes for hours, and that's where the wrists came in. And I constantly switch from matched to traditional grip for whatever gig I'm on.

MD: What else can you suggest?

Terreon: As I said earlier, practice all the rudiments at extremes of volume, and very slowly. Drummers practice playing fast, but you'll rarely be required to play that fast on the gig. Get the control and technique at a slow tempo.

MD: What are the particulars of your technique that make a difference to your drumming? Do you sit high or low? Play heel-down or heel-up?

Terreon: At one point, for straight-ahead I would sit really high. But for pocket stuff I prefer to sit with my thighs parallel to the snare drum. I'm constantly changing between heel-up and heel-down depending on what's necessary.

MD: Do you play the toms at an angle or flat?

Terreon: Pretty flat. For me, everything is about easy access. If you look at the drummers in the early days, they sat fairly high and played over the drums, as opposed to sitting low and under the drums. Buddy Rich played with the cymbals flat, the toms flat. I think it came from marching bands and competition snare drumming. It's easy to have it all right there.

MD: What tips can you give for playing creatively with aggression while maintaining control?

Terreon: Practicing rudiments is part of it. Another part is to play music, and think music. A lot of drummers wouldn't do half the things they do if they were thinking about the music. Some drummers might see me on one gig and think, "He's alright," 'cause I'm not playing a lot of stuff—because the gig doesn't call for it. But on another gig it might be the total opposite. The thing is to know what and what not to play. There's no point in trying to impress other drummers, because another drummer is not going to be the one who hires you.

People hire me because I'm going to be creative, but I'm also going to be very musical. That's the biggest compliment I can get. Other musicians always talk about how my cymbals sound, and you don't usually hear that about a drummer. Most drummers just crash and ride.

MD: How do Christian McBride and Stefon Harris differ as leaders and in what they require of you?

Terreon: With Christian it's more of a set format, it's not as open and free as with Stefon. But it's the same intensity. If you're really listening to what's happening, you shouldn't play the same with one artist as you do with another. No gig should sound the same.

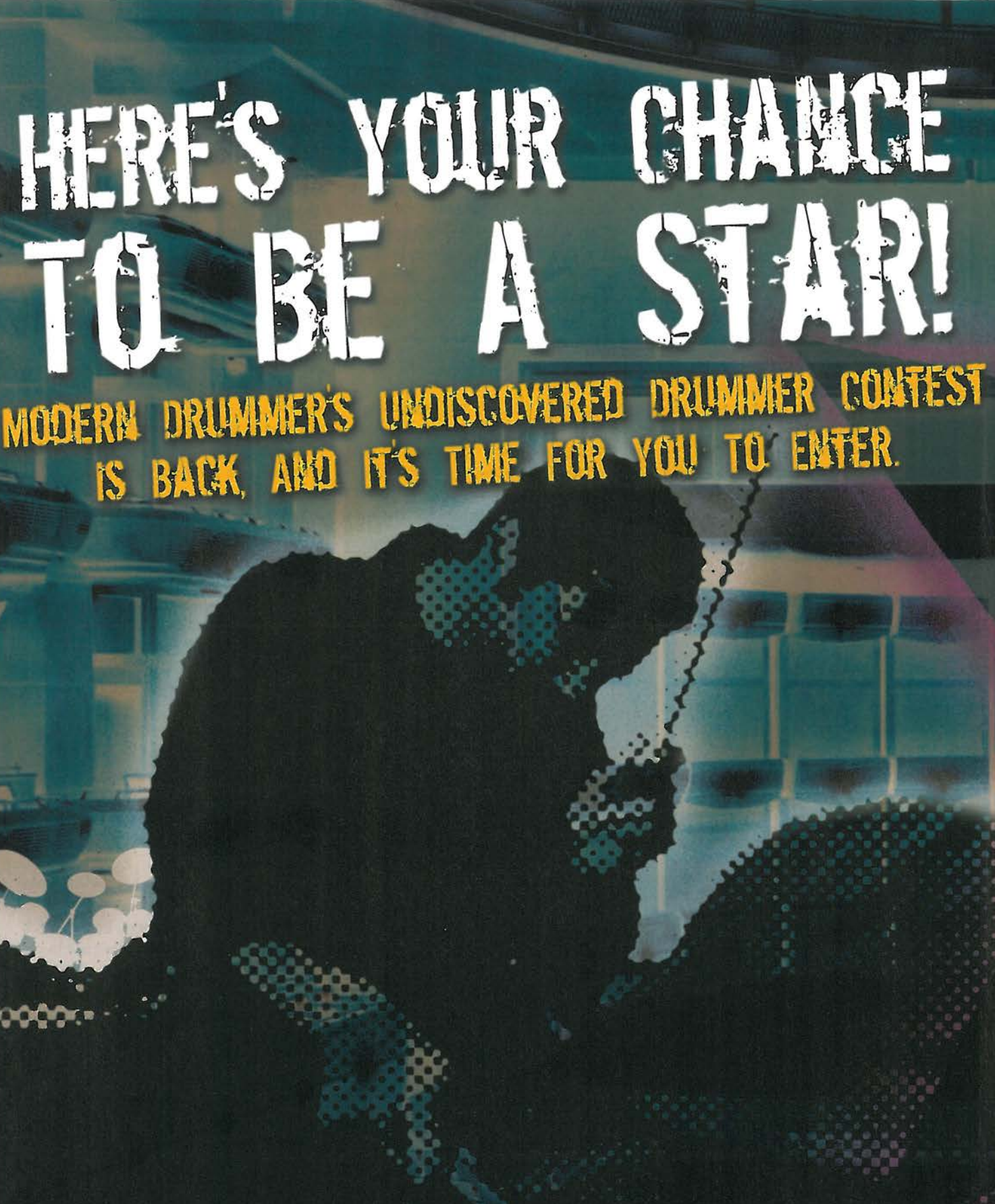
MD: What are the challenges with Yerba Buena?

Terreon: When we play live, I play with a lot of samplers and loops. I don't use in-ear monitors, just earplugs. So the challenge there is to make sure the time is right.

MD: What are your long-term career goals?

Terreon: I want to work with more pop acts. I even auditioned for The Counting Crows a couple of years ago. And I want to play with Sting, like every other drummer on the planet.

But whatever gig I'm on, I think music first. I also treat people the way I want to be treated. I know a lot of great drummers who don't work at all. That's sad, but that's the reality of it. The bottom line is: You can't play for drummers. You have to play for the musicians you're working with.



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2. Include a brief bio of your drumming background (100 words or less).

3. Provide proof of your age. (A copy of your driver's license or birth certificate is acceptable.) Your age as of March 1, 2005 will determine which group your performance is entered into.

4. Fill out the form below (or a photocopy), and sign and submit it with your $25 (non-refundable) entry fee.

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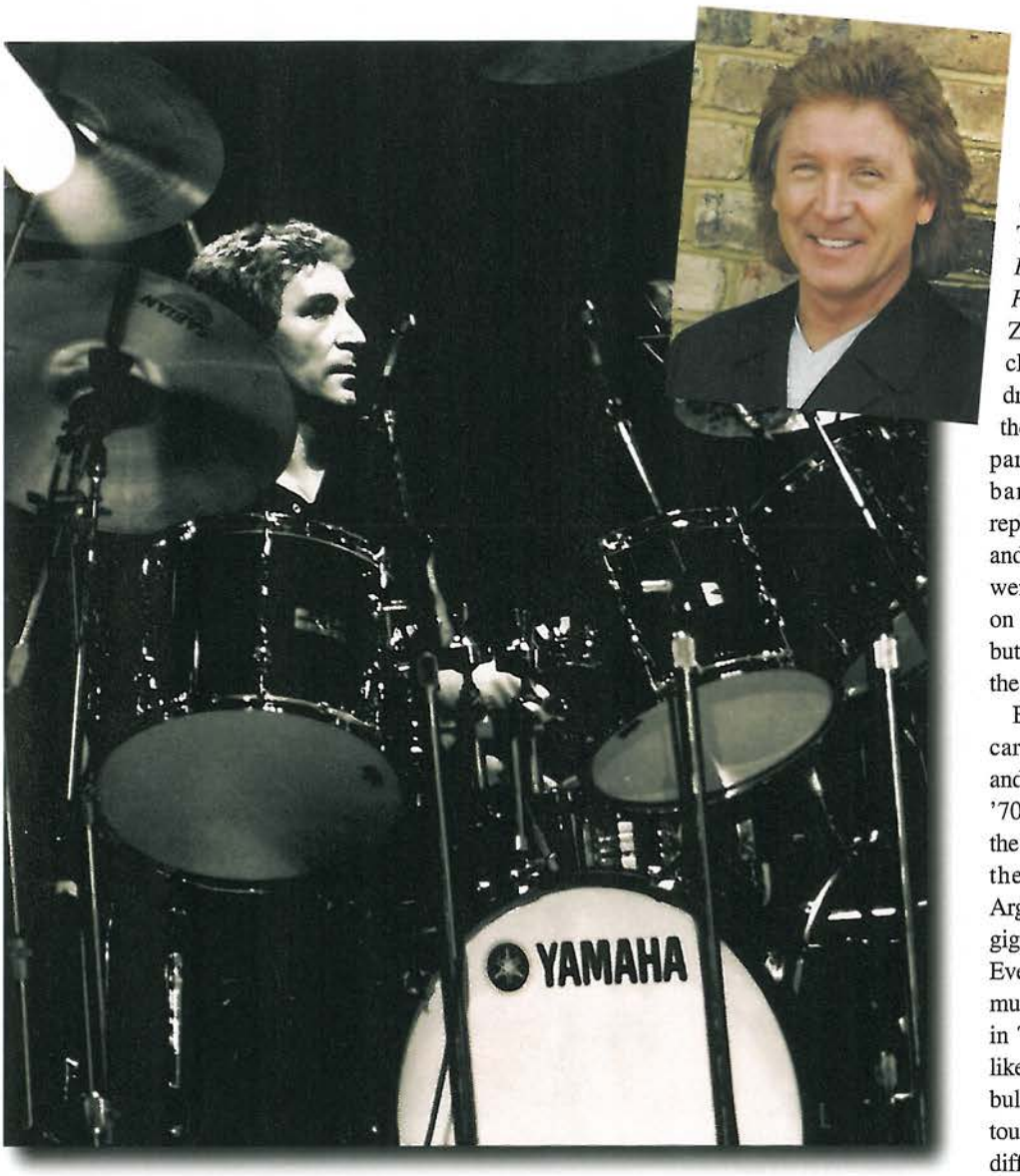
Kenney Jones

The Who, Rod & The Faces, And Beyond

by Adam Budofsky



Rock History 101 tells us that mid-'60s England was one of the most fertile musical scenes of the last century. The bands who came out of the British Invasion are ingrained in rock lore: The Who, The Rolling Stones, The Kinks, The Beatles, The Animals, The Zombies, Fleetwood Mac, The Hollies, The Yardbirds, The Pretty Things...the list is almost shocking in its scope. Among the most dynamic of all these groups was The Small Faces, featuring singer/guitarist Steve Marriott, bassist Ronnie Lane, keyboardist Ian McLagan, and drummer Kenney Jones.

Like their peers, early on The Small Faces specialized in adrenalized R&B, Motown, and blues. Also like their competition, The Small Faces quickly developed a distinct sound. Their 1968 album *Ogden's Nut Gone Flake* ranks alongside The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper*, The Who's *Tommy*, and The Zombies' *Odessey And Oracle* as a pinnacle of '60s art-pop. Jones' warm but tough drumming supported the band through all their great musical advances. This became particularly clear after Marriott left the band with a shortened name and the replacement duo of guitarist Ronnie Wood and singer Rod Stewart. American airwaves were not only treated to Kenney's bluster on tunes like The Faces' "Stay With Me," but on some of Rod Stewart's solo hits, like the classic "I Know I'm Losing You."

Eventually Stewart's ascending solo career overshadowed the band's albums, and The Faces ground to a halt in the early '70s. Kenney, however, would be back on the map by the end of the decade, replacing the late Keith Moon in The Who. Arguments could be made that Kenny's new gig was the least *or* most enviable in rock. Everyone knew Keith was irreplaceable as a musician and a personality, and any change in The Who's revolutionary sound would likely draw much scrutiny. Kenney took the bull by the horns, though. He successfully toured with the band through an immensely difficult time, and recorded what would be the band's last two noteworthy albums, *Face Dances* and *It's Hard*. To his credit, Kenney practically reinvented his playing in the process.

Jones' drumming career doesn't stop with The Faces and The Who, though. He's racked up an impressive list of freelance sessions, with artists as diverse as '80s pop chanteuse Sheena Easton, The Moody Blues' John Lodge, and early rock heroes like Chuck Berry and Jerry Lee Lewis.

These days Kenney's readying his own band, The Jones Gang, for a long tour of The States supporting a new album that comes out this spring. The group features singer Robert Hart (Bad Company), guitarist Gary Grainger (Rod Stewart, Paul Young), and bass player Rick Wills (Foreigner, Peter Frampton, Bad Company). "I've got all drums blaring now," Kenney says excitedly today. "They are out of their holsters and firing."

Set up with a brand-new Yamaha kit and his beloved Sabian cymbals—the drummer was the company's first endorser—Jones is jazzed to again be in the public eye after laying low for a while, even talking about a possible Faces reunion tour. "I enjoyed every single moment of recording with the band," Kenney insists. "We were a creative band, and we all had this telepathy between us. We never ever told each other what to play. We just sort of did it." Evidence of that musical sixth sense can be found on Rhino's stunning new Faces box set, *Five Guys Walk Into A Bar....* The package features all the band's great sides, plus a wealth of unreleased material, offering further proof of Kenney Jones' prowess behind the kit.

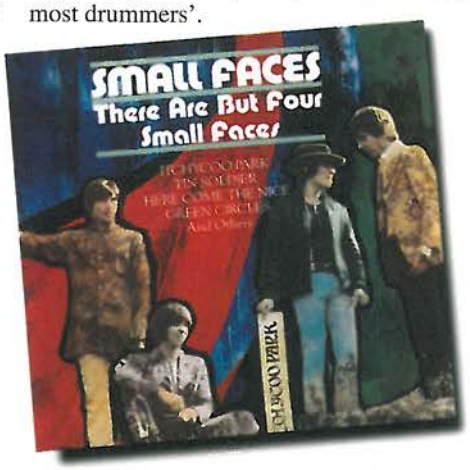
To start this month's *Playback* with Kenney Jones, let's go back to Chapter 1 in his career, the original Mod rockers' debut. Kenney sets the scene in his own words....

The Small Faces

There Are But Four Small Faces (1966)

Glyn Johns was our engineer right from the word go. I was very fortunate, because at that time Glyn was known as the best engineer in England, if not the world. He was an expert at getting great drum sounds. Basically it was a very simple setup: just a couple of overheads and a snare mic'. You really get the ambient sound of the drums that way. Glyn would experiment with sound as well—echoes and sustains and stuff.

Also, I don't know what it is, but I've got a completely different sound from most other drummers. For rock gigs I play with my left stick turned around the other way [butt end]. I also hit the drums a lot harder than most players—or so I'm told—and my tuning is completely different from most drummers'.



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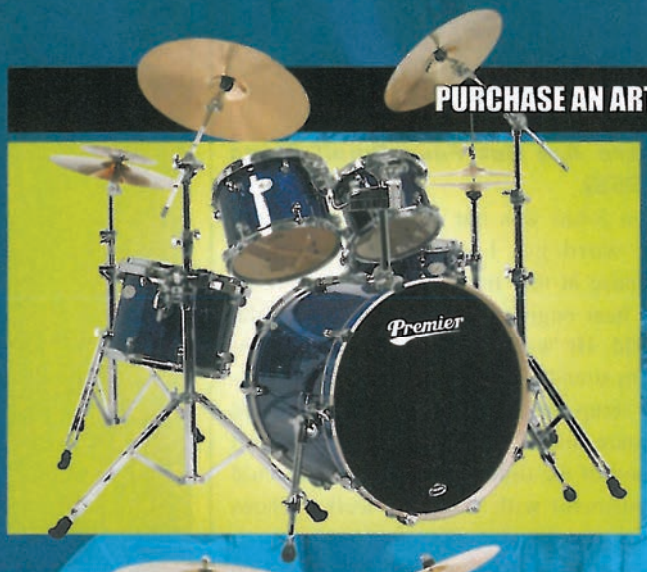

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The Small Faces
Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake (1968)

That was a fantastic album to record. People say it took us a year to make it, but it didn't. The actual recording didn't take long at all. But by that time we were doing lots of gigs, and we had to fit recording in between. *Ogden's* was the first concept album of its type. It was innovative, and it

took us somewhere else. One of the things that was probably in the back of Steve Marriott's mind at the time—which made him decide to form Humble Pie—was the fact that we were all feeling the same: "How do we follow *this*?" We were all young, and we shouldn't have been so impatient. But I'm reworking it into a full-length animated film, redoing the soundtrack as well. Pete Townshend is involved in the writing.

The Small Faces
First Step (1970)

After Steve Marriott left, we were all desperate to get rid of our pop image. We were a completely new band, with Rod Stewart and Ron Wood on board. We were much more blues-oriented now, and a lot heavier, and we could go into a different musical atmosphere. We were quite excited about that. We hadn't played a lot together,

though, other than jamming and stuff like that, and we didn't have a lot of songs. So we had to literally write songs on the spot. That album was when we first started discovering each other.

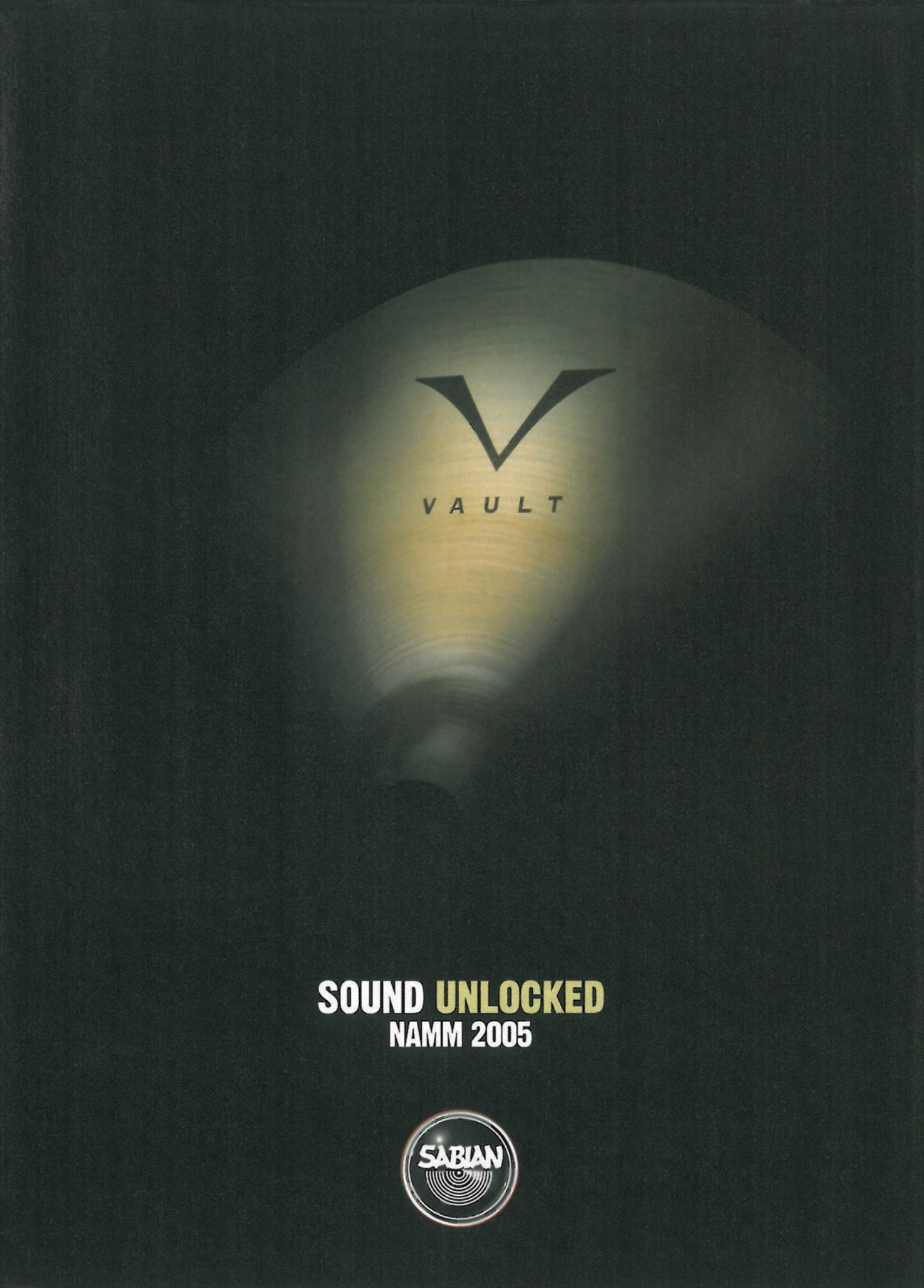
My drumming approach did have to change, as did everyone's. It was very loose one minute, very tight the next, and very blues-oriented the next. It was quite strange, and I only realized that recently, when we did a tribute to Ronnie Lane at the Albert Hall. Pete Townshend came on and did a song, and so did Ron Wood. One of the songs we did in rehearsal was "Flying," though Woody wasn't there for that one. As we started it, I realized it didn't feel the same. It was quite strange. I said this to Woody last week, and he said, "Ah, that's because you needed me there, you needed The Faces to do that." That song is something only The Faces could do. It sounds incredibly simple on record, but the minute you go and play it with someone else, it doesn't happen. The Faces are unique in playing so laid back.

Rod Stewart
Every Picture Tells A Story (1971)

We used to do some of Rod's songs live with The Faces, and "I Know I'm Losing You" was one of them. I'll never forget when we recorded the studio version of

that. I was watching a film at home and Rod called up and said, "We're in the studio, can you come and do 'Losing You' for me?" Luckily it was only five minutes away. So I drove to the studio, got on the drumkit, did the track with the drum break in it, and finished. Then I went back to my house and watched the end of the film. That's how quickly we did that one.

The song was never meant to have a drum solo, just a drum break that Rod would chant over. But in time the drum break got longer and longer, eventually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turning into a bit of a solo. I never view it as a drum solo, though. If I were to choose to do a solo, it wouldn't be that kind of rhythm, and it wouldn't be that tempo, although I've gotten used to doing it by now. There's lots of press rolls and triplets with the bass drum. Oddly enough, while I was doing it I kept thinking about "Let There Be Drums."

The Faces
A Nod Is As Good As A Wink...To A Blind Horse (1971)

"Stay With Me" from that album is actually difficult to play, as we found out when trying to do it in my band. It's 16ths

on the hi-hat all the way through, and in order to get the groove right you have to get the tempo bang-on. Tempos could be a nightmare in The Faces, because you didn't know what everyone had been up to the night before!

Chuck Berry
The London Sessions (1972)

Chuck was great to work with. He's one of my heroes. I think that was the sessions where we did "My Ding-A-Ling." A funny old song, that one. *[The tune, a huge latter-day hit for Berry, is included on the album, but in a live version featuring Robbie McIntosh on drums.]* Chuck loved playing with us British musicians. It's funny, I remember he kept getting his fingers stuck in the strings. I thought, "Man, he's got big fingers." But he was as great to work with as I expected. You hear all these horror stories about Chuck Berry, and I know *some* of them are true, but we didn't see any of that at that time.

Jerry Lee Lewis
Sometimes A Memory Ain't Enough (1973)

That was a similar thing to the Chuck Berry session. Jerry Lee came to London to record, which seemed to be the fashion at the time. He was great to work with too. It was lovely, because it's nice having someone like that, one of your heroes, appreciate your drumming. But he did lose it one day in the studio when this young record exec came in and said, "Oh Jerry, you're fantastic. Love to have you here, here's a bottle of champagne...." "Well then we better drink that straight

away!" Apparently he wasn't supposed to drink at that time. He had one glass and it was like someone turned a switch on. He just kept picking on this young guy, "I can whip you around the block!" and all this crap.

It was never difficult playing with guys like that, though, because a lot of them were my influences anyway, so I played in their style naturally. Booker T. & The MG's was always on my record player, for instance. Al Jackson will remain my hero till the day I'm gone. He's definitely the man who knew his place as a drummer. Alongside all that was The Shadows, Gene

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Kenney Jones

Vincent—but Chuck Berry especially, because I loved his lyrics. And he had great beats to play as a drummer. I also loved Ray Charles, Jimmy McGriff, Mingus, and all that. Before anything else, I was very much influenced by jazz. People don't realize it, but I play jazz quite a bit. From a drummer's point of view it's the only way to get your rocks off. And to be honest, in order to play proper rock 'n' roll beats, you must have a swing to it. Rock 'n' roll beats come from jazz, really.

Kenney Jones
"Ready Or Not" single (1974)

I did that just because I needed to know if there was another side to me, that I could do it if I wanted to. And I found that once I did it and got it out of my system, I didn't need to do it anymore.

The Rolling Stones
It's Only Rock 'N Roll (1974)

You have gates in London leaving Richmond Park to different parts of the city: I lived on Kingston Gate, Mac lived on Sheen Gate, Woody lived on Richmond Gate. The park is massive, there are thousands of acres. And you had to drive all the way around it at night if it was closed. Woody would always call up just as I was getting into bed at about midnight or something and say, "Kenney, we haven't got a drummer." [*Wood joined The Rolling Stones after the breakup of The Faces.*] In those days you never knew who was going to be in the studio. One day Bob Dylan was there, so we just had a play; another time Clapton was there. This time it was just Woody and Mick Jagger.

Woody had just got all this new equipment for the studio, so he was in there twiddling knobs and pissing about, and he left me and Jagger sort of playing together. Mick was playing guitar and singing a bit. I just played along and he said to me, "That's nice, do that." And I said, "It's only rock 'n' roll," and he said, "Yeah, but I like it." And then we started to sing it. We just played that riff and it kept going. Then Woody recorded it and put guitar on it. Now, it was only supposed to be a demo. Later I found out that they went in to try to record it properly but couldn't capture the feel, even with Charlie, which I found strange. So the rest of The Stones put it out the way it was. I felt so guilty, so when I saw Charlie I said, "Charlie, I'm told they kept my drumming. I'm really sorry, it's not the way I wanted things to work out." He said, "Ah, it sounds like me anyway." He's great, brilliant!

Tommy
original motion picture soundtrack (1975)

I was on a lot of *Tommy*. One of the funniest things that happened during the recording was when Moony came to see me record. He was a friend anyway. Tony Newman did a couple things on there as well. So one time when the three of us were in the studio Moony just locked all three of us inside—and no one could get in. There was a bar up inside the studio, and we were drinking in front of the control room window, just getting pissed in front of everyone else for an hour or so, which was driving them nuts. They were two nutty drummers, I've got to tell you. Tony Newman was worse than Moony!

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Joan Armatrading
Show Me Some Emotion (1977)

That's another one Glyn Johns engineered. The first time I met Joan she couldn't remember any of the musicians' names, so she'd talk through Glyn: "If you could tell the bass player...and tell the drummer...." Eventually Glyn turned around to her: "Do you realize who all these people are? They've all come to help you out here, and you don't even know their names!" Later I realized that she was just incredibly nervous, and once she broke through that, she was great. I adore her. She knew exactly what she was on about—very dynamic in her way of playing, and very positive in her voice.

Pete Townshend
Empty Glass (1980)

When I joined The Who, Pete was doing his solo album *Empty Glass* as well. "Rough Boys" was one of the tracks we did. I said to Pete, "Ah, this should really be a Who song." There's actually a couple of songs on there that I think should have been Who songs. But he kind of went, "Ooh, I don't know." I think I said the wrong thing, but I meant it.

They got a nice drum sound, too, but it wasn't like the Who stuff, which is the sound I would have prefered. But then again, I had just joined The Who and I didn't know quite how the band was thinking about their sound then. Pete said to me when I first joined the band, "Now we have an opportunity to be completely different." So I thought, Okay, maybe that's the way they want to go. But it was kind of weird.

The Who
Face Dances (1981)

Playing with The Who...you can call it unique. The bass player was my foot, and I was playing in the middle of two lead guitarists. One "guitarist" had the bass end of it and one had the high end to it, and I had to fit in somewhere in the middle. That's when I started to learn different bass drum techniques and ended up having the fastest foot in the industry at one point, without using two bass drums. I also started to deliver a punchier feel; I got fitter and my arms got bigger. You had to be 110% fit to play with The Who, because it was like three and a half hours of non-stop drumming. The only rest I got, really, was on "Behind Blue Eyes."

Playing live with The Who was probably the best part of being in the band for me. We toured quite a lot, and I got stronger and more with it. "You Better You Bet" in particular was a good recording. Changing the backbeat between the snare and the tom was just my handle on it.

Kenney's Trust

One project very close to Kenney Jones' heart is The Small Faces Charitable Trust, which the drummer established in 1999 on behalf of The Small Faces and in memory of late bandmembers Steve Marriott and Ronnie Lane. The trust was set up to provide care and support for children and youngsters who are deprived, underprivileged, sick, or mentally or physically challenged and who need help, opportunity, and a new beginning in life. Funds are raised by donations and by the organization of fundraising activities such as concerts, recordings, sporting events, and celebrity appearances. For more information on the trust, go to http://freespace.virgin.net/kenney.jones/.

Small Faces
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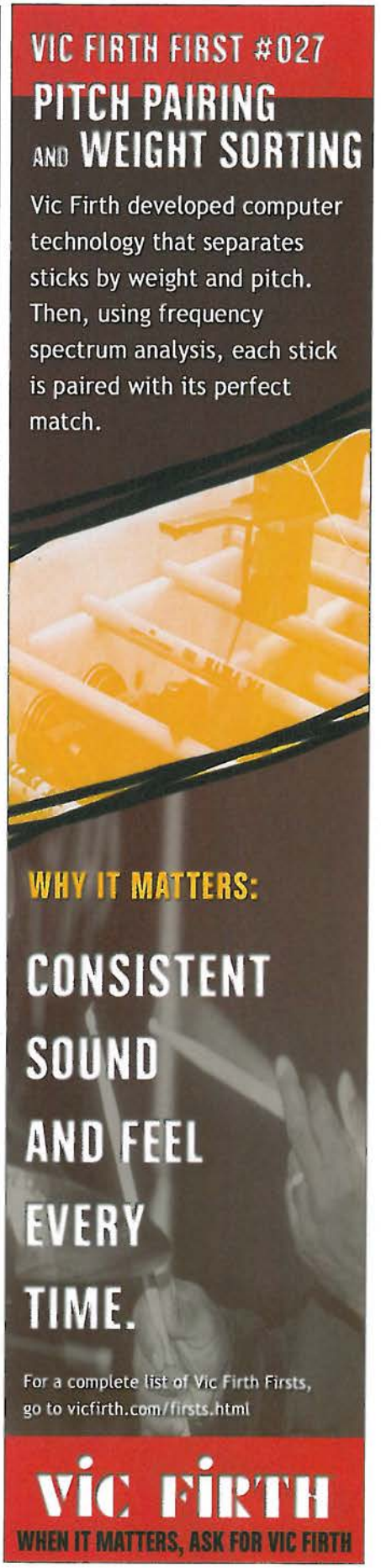

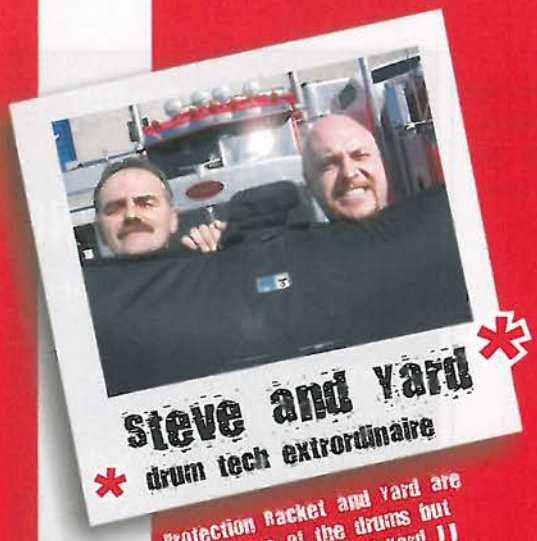

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The Who It's Hard (1982)

I liked playing "Athena" mainly because when it got to the middle there was that "rababababa" part. I liked those types of things that were different. "Eminence Front" I quite liked as well because that was different for them. There are some tricky bits on there on the bass drum. At that time there was a fad of that kind of beat going around. I just had to do it slightly different from everybody else.

More Kenney

The Faces
Long Player (1971), Ooh La La (1973), Five Guys Walk Into A Bar... (2004)
Sophomore release *Long Player* sees the new band really coming into its own; features their killer take on Paul McCartney's "Maybe I'm Amazed." *Ooh La La* is the group's mixed swan song, though it's still well worth having. *Five Guys...* is the fantastic new box set.

The Small Faces Playmates (1977), 78 In The Shade (1978)
Reunion discs with Marriott. Interesting if non-essential.

Rod Stewart / The Faces Live: Coast To Coast, Overture And Beginners (1974)
Bassist Ronnie Lane was gone by now, but the group's notoriously bawdy persona remains. Sometimes maligned, but indispensable for an accurate idea of the band's infamous live show.

Ron Wood & Ronnie Lane
Mahoney's Last Stand (1976)
Recently reissued soundtrack by The Faces' string players. Worth tracking down.

Rod Stewart
Gasoline Alley (1970), Never A Dull Moment (1972), Smiler (1974)
Classic rock rarely sounded better than this. Look for Rod's *Reason To Believe: The Complete Mercury Studio* recordings, which contains these three early Stewart albums, plus his self-titled debut, the 5-star *Every Picture Tells A Story*, and non-album tracks like "Pinball Wizard."

Vigrass & Osborne
Steppin' Out (1974)
Rare album by Moody Blues/Elton John collaborators.

Joan Armatrading
Joan Armatrading (1976)
The folk/jazz/rock singer's stunning debut, featuring "Love And Affection."

Roger Daltrey
McVicar soundtrack (1980)

One of the Who lead singer's better solo outings, featuring the hit "Free Me."

The Law The Law (1991)
Collaboration with Bad Company singer Paul Rodgers.

John Lodge
Natural Avenue (1977)
Solo set by Moody Blues singer/bassist.

Sheena Easton Do You (1985)
Yep, *that* Sheena Easton. Kenney claims not to remember much about this session, produced by Nile Rodgers.

Ken Hensley Free Spirit (1981)
Solo outing by Uriah Heep keyboardist.

Various Artists
Flash Fearless Vs. The Zorg Women, Parts 5 And 6 (1975)
This recently reissued, campy take on a British comic features Alice Cooper and John Entwhistle—not to mention Bill Bruford, Keith Moon, and Carmine Appice! No, we have no idea what it sounds like. Feel free to let us know, though.

MD Radio To hear Kenney Jones with The Who, The Faces, and more, tune in to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

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UFIP Cymbals

Sounds From Under The Tuscan Sun

by Rick Van Horn

Ahhhh, Tuscany—the sunny central province of Italy. Known for its warm climate, its rich soil, and its place in art history. (Florence—city of Michelangelo's David—is in Tuscany.) The province is also known for a tradition of metal-working that dates back to before the Roman empire. And that tradition is alive and well today, in the form of some of the world's most unusual cymbals.

The lovely Tuscan town of Pistoia, situated at the foot of the Apennine mountains, is the home of the Tronci and Biasei families, whose ancestors were making pipes for church organs as far back as the mid-1400s. Around 1860 they started adding cymbals to the sound effects within those organs. As the pipe-organ business declined in the early 20th century, the families discovered that there was a market for their cymbals.

The two families started small-scale cymbal manufacturing in the early 1930s. Eventually, another artisan family, the Zanchis, entered the fray. The families manufactured cymbals separately under a multitude of brand names for the next thirty years. But by 1968 it became obvious that it was impractical for three small manufacturers to compete side-by-side. So in 1968 they joined forces to form the Italian Cymbal Manufacturers Association. In Italian, the name is Unione Fabbricanti Italiani Piatti Musicali—which is a bit too much to stamp on a cymbal. Thus the acronym "UFIP" was born.

Unveiling UFIP

Here's a quick overview of UFIP's extensive line of cymbals and percussion instruments.

ROTO CAST LINES

Class Series

UFIP states that they put more of everything into this series: more volume, more tone, more warmth, more fullness, and more dynamic range. As a result, Class cymbals are the company's most versatile series. The cymbals are available in H (heavy/high), M (medium/mid), and L (light/low) weight categories for each model, allowing drummers a choice of frequency range and volume potential without changing the basic acoustic character of the cymbal.

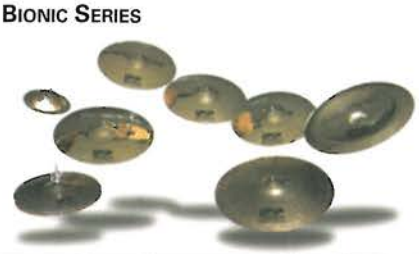
Brilliant Series

Brilliant Series cymbals are similar to Class models, but are given a brilliant buffed surface to reduce high overtones. Following the buffing process the cymbals receive a special heating treatment to add warmth and depth, and to further control overtones. The cymbals are said to offer exceptionally full-bodied mid-range tones and long sustain.

Natural Series

A combination of a special tempering ("pre-aging") process, along with a method of "deep hammering" gives Natural cymbals a dark surface and a correspondingly dark, mellow sound character. They're said to possess tonal qualities and cutting power that will appeal to lovers of "traditional" cymbals.

Bionic Series



Bionic cymbals are designed to provide a synthesis of power and warmth. They're targeted at drummers seeking loud, powerful cymbals with quick response and a very high dynamic range. The cymbals go through a tempering process to reduce surface tension, after which they are hand-polished to give them a shimmering look and an extremely hard, dense surface. "Deep hammering" is also used to balance the cymbals' penetrating, aggressive sound with some mellow qualities.

Experience Series

The Experience Series is UFIP's category for unique models made in limited quantities, special orders, and experimental designs. Currently the series includes Real Chinas (B20 alloy) and Tiger Chinas (B12 alloy), which feature inverted flanges and hammered shaping. Also included are Vintage rides, which re-create cymbals of the 1930s and 1960s.

Symphonic And Marching

UFIP offers crash cymbal pairs for symphonic and marching use. Each are hand-cast of B20 alloy, then hammered and tuned. Symphonic models are offered in Francese (light), Viennese (medium), and Germanic (heavy) versions from 16" to 21" in size. Marching models have different hammering and surface finishing for greater attack and presence. They're available in medium and heavy versions from 14" through 18".

STANDARD CAST LINES

Genio Series

The Genio range of Standard Cast cymbals was developed for price-conscious buyers seeking professional-quality cymbals. The cymbals are made of B22+ bronze alloy, using contemporary casting and shaping methods to create the cymbal blanks. From that point hammering and lathing is done by a combination of automated and hand processes. The Genio range offers a complete line of models, in pre-selected sets and as individual cymbals. Also available are Genio Marching Series pairs.

Primo Series

The Primo series is designed for beginners looking for a cymbal set that offers truly musical acoustic character. Also made of B22+ alloy, Primo cymbals offer a cast-bronze alternative to comparably priced B8 sheet cymbals. Pre-packs and a limited individual model range are available.

Sounds And Percussion

The original Ice Bell and the unique Ximbau jingle/cymbal combo are among UFIP's extensive metal percussion range.

UFIP specializes in metal percussion instruments, familiar and unique. These include their original Ice Bells, Tingle Cups, Burma Bells, Tibetan Bells, Ogororo (bell disks), Wire Chimes, and Tube Chimes. The line also includes UFIP's exclusive Ximbaus, which are wedge-shaped sections of cymbals (including the bell) fitted with tambourine jingles or rivets and washers, to create a musical white-noise sound. Ximbaus are available in three sizes.

Gongs And Tam Tams

UFIP Gongs and Tam Tams are noted for their roles in concert music and music therapy. Targo Tam Tams are made of bell bronze, and are available in three different variations of hammering and lathing. Art Tam Tams and Gongs are made of softer brass bronze alloy. Five variations are available. Custom designs and experimental models are also a company specialty.

UFIP

UFIP's current president is the scion of the Tronci family, Luigi Tronci. He is a gracious and enthusiastic gentleman who loves nothing better than to regale visitors with the history of his company, his town, and his province. After many years of hands-on involvement in cymbal production, Luigi has now turned that responsibility over to his son, Damiano. In contrast to his father, Damiano is a quiet individual who lets his craftsmanship do the talking.

The Biasei family is represented at UFIP by Luigi Tronci's long-time partner, Carlo Biasei, who is now semi-retired. Carlo's son Alberto is the company's general director and administrative manager. The Zanchi family bowed out of the partnership some years back.

A key figure in the UFIP operation today is Alex Mühlbauer. Eighteen years ago Alex was a successful drum retailer based in Hanover, Germany. He came to UFIP looking for cymbals to sell. After establishing a relationship with the company, he began to offer ideas for "contemporizing" their production and marketing efforts. The connection between Alex and UFIP grew, and today he is a general manager of the company. Alex acted as our guide during *MD*'s visit to the UFIP factory.

Unique Production

We said earlier that the cymbals made by UFIP were among the world's most unusual. That's because UFIP's professional lines are created in a totally different process from that used by any other manufacturer.

Virtually all of the cymbals made elsewhere in the world are rolled, either by hand or by machine, into thin blanks or disks. These are then further worked to add the bell and create the final cymbal shape. UFIP, on the other hand, uses a method called rotocasting, in which molten cymbal alloy is poured into a mold that spins at 1,000 revolutions per minute. As a result of this molding process, the cymbal has its basic shape from the instant the metal cools.

To begin the rotocasting process, ingots of copper and tin are melted in an oven to create B20 bronze alloy. Once the alloy is ready, a technician dips a long-handled crucible into the oven to fill it with molten metal. Then he steps to a cymbal mold, where he carefully pours the metal through a 1"-diameter opening. Phosphor powder is added to make any impurities rise to the surface of the castings, where they will be removed in the shaping process.

After a precisely calculated time, the mold is opened, and another technician lifts out the formed casting with special tongs. The pourer goes back to the oven for a new batch of molten metal, and a third man sprays the inside of the mold with chalk powder to prepare it for the next pouring. The sequence of operations creates a kind of industrial ballet, and the slightest disruption to the routine could result in serious injury.

UFIP currently employs two casting ovens. Each holds about 600 kilos (1,323 lbs.) of metal, heated to about 1,200° centigrade (2,192° Fahrenheit). Depending on the size of cymbals being cast, 600 to 1,000 cymbals can be made within each casting run. That *sounds* like a lot, but the casting process has proven to be a bottleneck in UFIP's production line.

"We can't do casting every day," says Alex Mühlbauer. "We need one day for setup, and one day for casting. It's a time-con-

suming operation, because we have to clean all the molds and do other maintenance."

To break the bottleneck and speed up production, UFIP is in the process of developing two new rotocasting machines. Once they are fully operational, the company will be able to run two separate casting operations, thereby dramatically increasing their production capacity.

The blanks that come out of the molds are created strictly by the centrifugal force of the rotation. No pressure is exerted to shape them. UFIP believes that the rotating process aligns the molecular structure of the metal differently from the way a traditional rolling process does. Still, there are some drawbacks to the method.

"Each individual cymbal is created in a separate steel mold," explains Alex. "If we want to change the shape of a cymbal, we have to make a whole new mold. But we believe that rotocasting offers so many advantages, we choose to stay with it."

Tempering

After the blanks are taken out of the molds, they are allowed to air cool, during which time they are cleaned and drilled with their center holes. Then they are tempered, to strengthen the metal and make it workable. This involves re-heating the castings to a specific temperature, after which they are quickly dipped into a tank of fresh water.

Before the castings are put in the tempering oven, they're completely coated with special mud. This mud acts as an insulator, so that the surface molecules of the cymbal are not scorched before the internal molecules are heated.

Quality Control

The rotocasting process conducted in UFIP's early days had some quality-control issues. "Nobody really cared about the dirt inside the molds," says Alex. "So we'd often get small dirt particles inside the casting. When Damiano Tronci entered the company seventeen years ago, he installed an air-purification system, and he instituted the use of phosphor powder to remove the dirt. Today, molds are cleaned lightly after every cymbal is poured, and they are thoroughly cleaned with steel scouring brushes after every 150 castings."

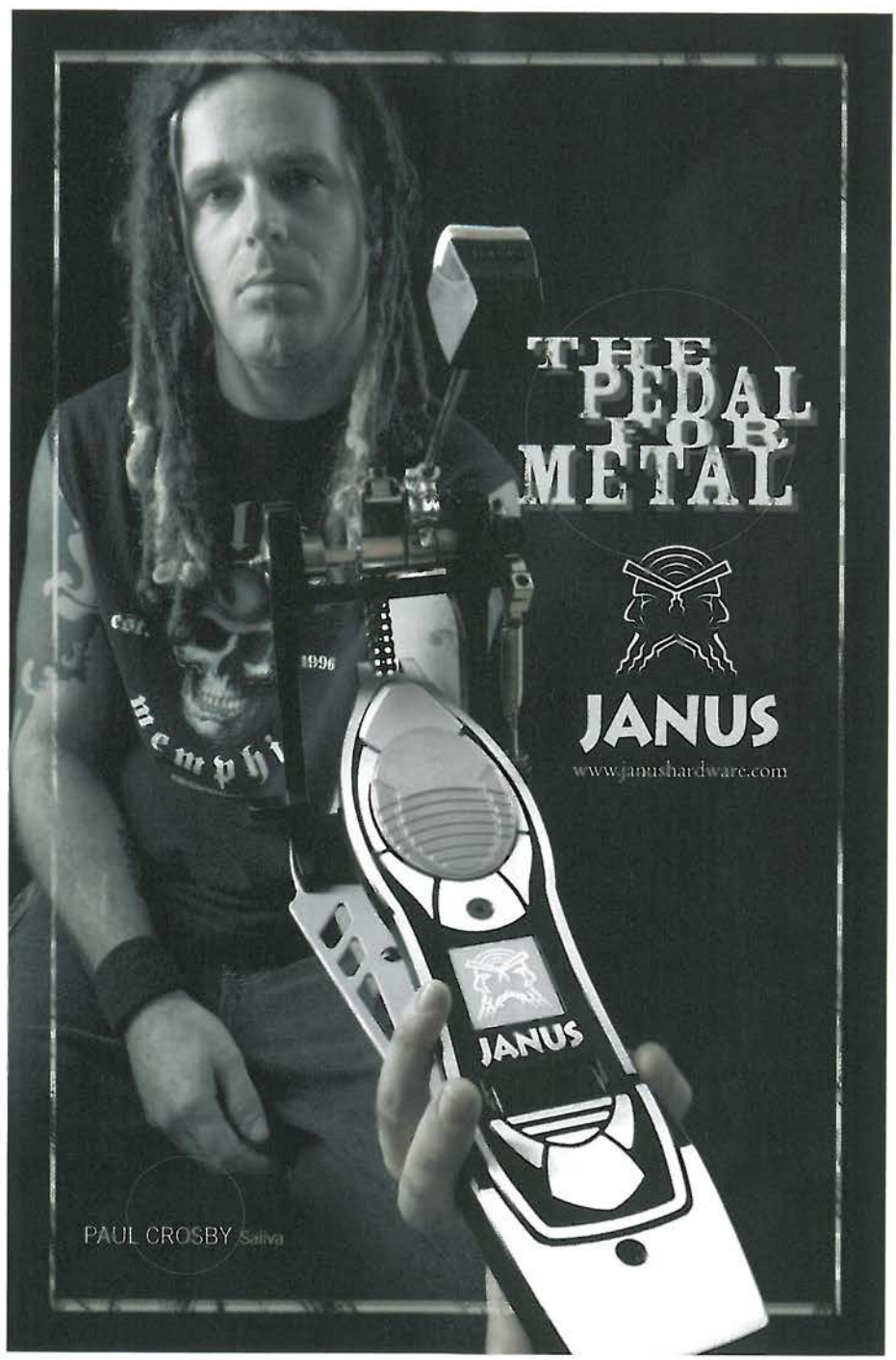
At each step along the production line, from casting to lathing, weight notations are made on the cymbals-in-progress. UFIP has determined the optimum weight for each point in production. The same goes for the thicknesses of the cup, the bow, and the edge of each cymbal, which are measured and recorded at each step.

"The result," says Alex, "is that we now have a very high-quality output. When I came here eighteen years ago, only forty out of a hundred cymbals were what I thought of as 'good.' Now I might find four out of a hundred that have to go back. And those mainly involve problems of the bow or the hammering, which can be re-worked."

Sculpting Cymbals

Rotocasting is only part of what makes UFIP cymbals unique. Another important factor is how they are literally sculpted from the molded casting.

"When cymbal material is rolled" explains Alex, "the resulting plate is the same thickness in the center and at the edge. Manufacturers who roll their own

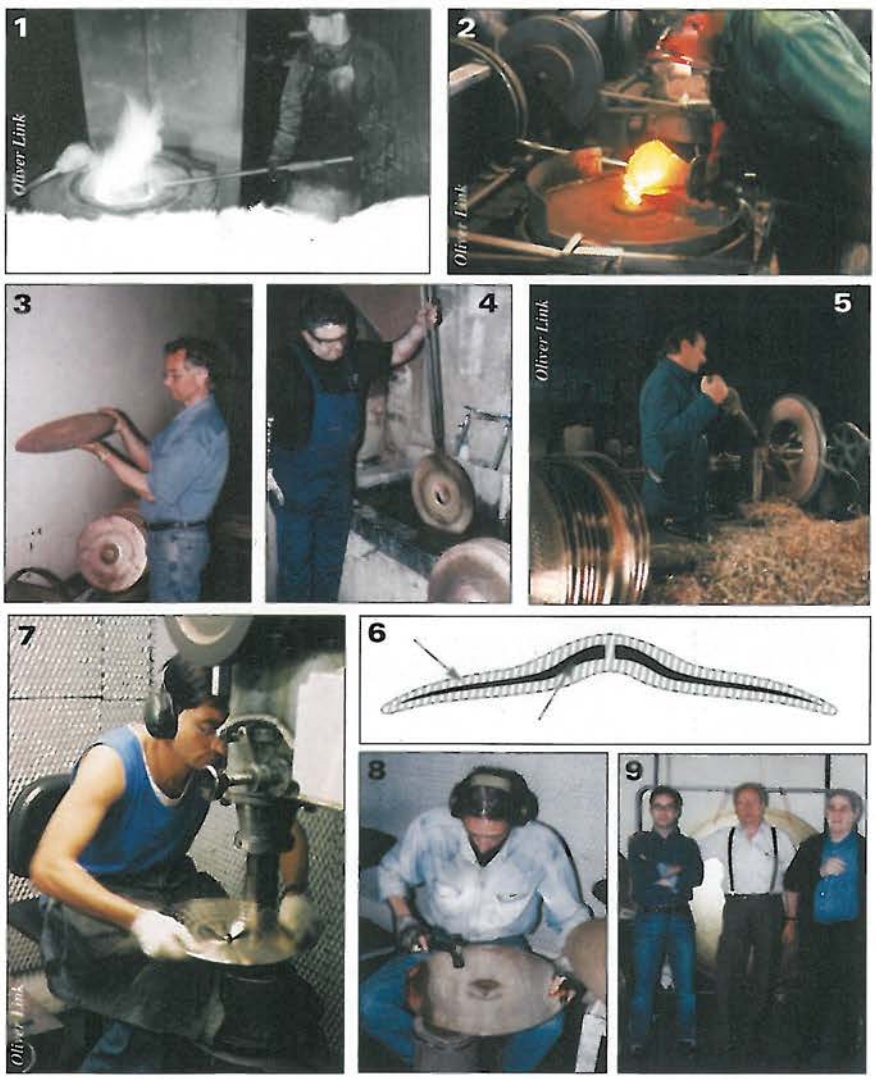


castings press the cup when the whole casting is still hot. Manufacturers who use plates heat up the center of the plate and then press in the cup. No matter which process they use, it changes the molecular structure of the metal in the cup. But when we cast a cymbal, the cup is a part of the original shape. This means that we can use a thicker metal plate to start with in order to sculpt the final shape of a thin cymbal. No other cymbal company is able to make cups as thick as ours. The cup being thicker than the edge is one of the factors that give UFIP cymbals their distinctive sounds. And this can only be achieved by the rotocasting method.

"As we work with the casting," Alex continues, "we remove material from the top and bottom, tapering the shape toward the edge. Because a casting has about three times the thickness and weight of the eventual final cymbal, we have enough 'meat' to sculpt it down to whatever shape and thickness we want. We can adjust how much we take from the top and the bottom of the cymbal, which in turn affects its vibration and its sound character. We can build more strength into the cymbal, even with edges that are thinner than those of most other cymbals. That's why our cymbals have a greater vibration potential and a wider overall frequency range."

Much of the sculpting process is done on a semi-automated lathe, because of the amount of material that must be removed. "If such large amounts were to be removed by hand," says Alex, "eventually the operator would tire, and the lathing would be inconsistent. The machine removes up to 50% of the material perfectly, every time. From there we do the rest of the lathing by hand. And some models that don't require large amounts of material to be removed are lathed entirely by hand."

UFIP Production: Artistry At Work



1. A technician ladels molten cymbal alloy from UFIP's furnace. 2. The alloy is poured into a mold that spins at 1,000 rpm. 3. UFIP's Alex Mühlbauer examines a molded casting prior to the tempering process. 4. Castings are re-heated, then hand-dipped into fresh water to temper and strengthen the metal. 5. A variety of lathing processes are used to remove material from the castings. 6. This diagram shows how castings are "sculpted" in order to create a cymbal's finished shape. 7. All UFIP models receive initial hammering on pneumatic machines. 8. Production manager Damiano Tronci personally performs much of the hand-hammering that fine-tunes many UFIP models. 9. Standing in front of one of the symphonic gongs that are a UFIP specialty are company president Luigi Tronci (center), general director and administrative manager Alberto Biasei (left), and Alberto's father, UFIP partner Carlo Biasei (right).

Hammering

After the cymbal blanks have been sculpted, they undergo various hammering steps, depending on the model. At this point they're still about 10% to 15% heavier than their final weight, because after the hammering they'll be lathed again. Those last lathing steps control the look and the fine-tuning of the cymbals.

Every cymbal receives a basic hammering on a pneumatic hammering machine. Specific models receive additional hand hammering. "We use different amounts of power and different sizes of hammers," says Alex. "Basically, the hammering steps we use depend on the sound we wish to achieve. Class Series cymbals, for instance, require seven different hammering steps to complete them."

The Sound Control Concept

During the period when UFIP's directors were working with Alex Mühlbauer to modernize and improve the company's lines, they developed what is now called the Sound Control system. "Twenty years ago," Alex explains, "they just cast a cymbal, finished it, and let the buyer decide what purpose it was for. Under the Sound Control concept, we start with an idea of what we want from a cymbal.

"We've tried to identify certain sound characteristics," Alex continues, "by talking to drummers and making prototypes. We already have a pretty good idea of what manufacturing methods we need to use in order to achieve any given sound. Today,

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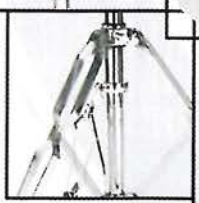

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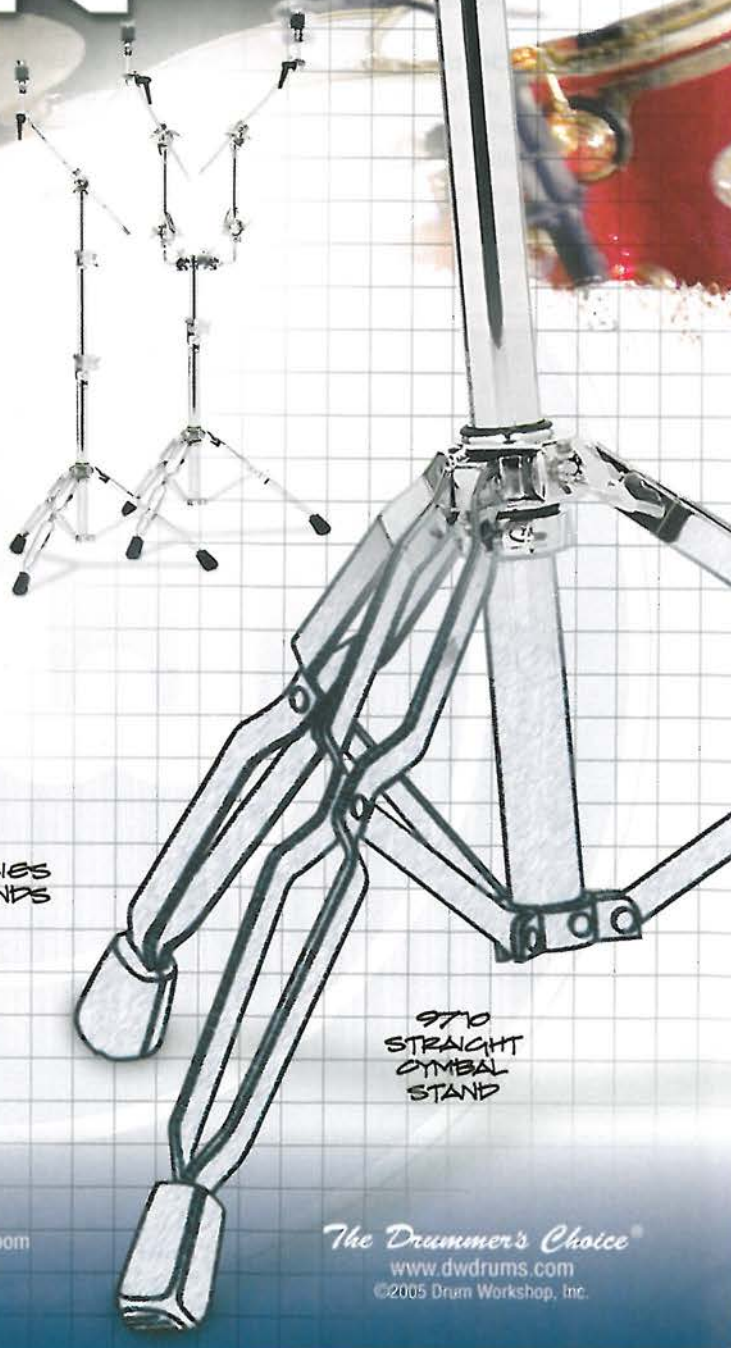

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we have our Experience line, in which anything is possible. But the other lines maintain consistent sound characteristics, because we've documented the processes and can duplicate them consistently."

Drummers who come to UFIP seeking specific cymbal sounds generally work with Luigi or Damiano Tronci to obtain what they're looking for. For example, ten years ago Charlie Watts asked if the company could duplicate some old UFIPs that he loved, including an old China. "We knew it would be difficult," says Alex, "because we had changed the molds since those cymbals were made. But we tried some other methods, and we were able to get the sounds that Charlie wanted. Of course, the new cymbals looked much different from his original models."

Class Distinction

Most of UFIP's professional-level Roto Cast series have very specific sonic characters. But the flagship Class Series takes a totally different approach.

"The Class range," says Alex, "was developed to fulfill *all* musical needs. To achieve that, we needed to build as many frequencies into one cymbal as possible. This means that the cymbal must be able to vibrate fast and slow at the same time. The only way to accomplish that is to use the largest tapering possible. So Class cymbals have the thickest cups and the thinnest edges of all our lines.

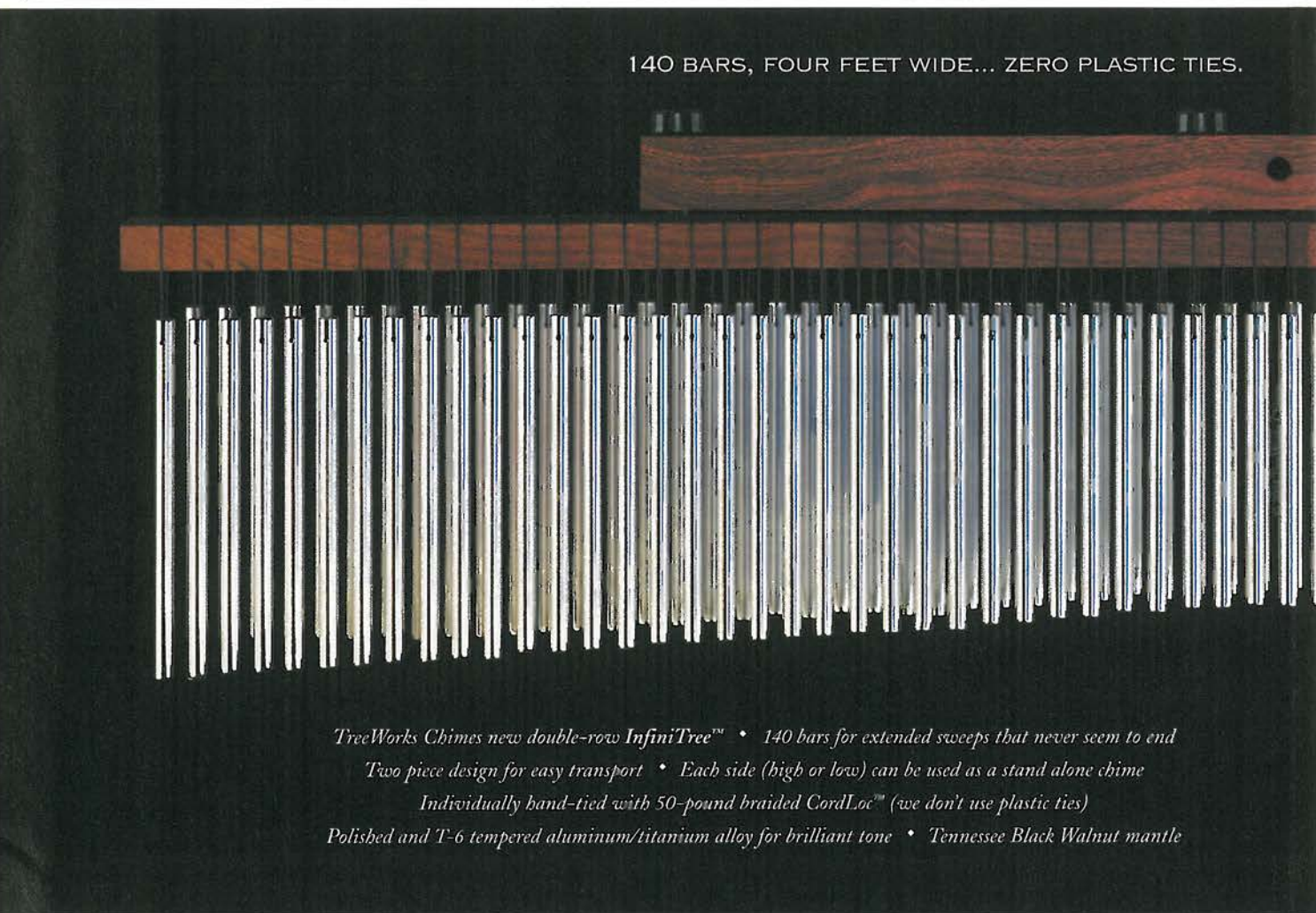
"Working in from the edges, we get slow vibrations building up to faster vibrations, until near the cup we get *very* fast vibrations. As a result, each Class cymbal has very high tones, very low tones, and everything in between. Drummers can determine how the cymbal will sound by how they play it. If they change their style of playing, the cymbal will follow. Even just using a different drumstick will dramatically change the sound of the cymbal."

Once UFIP had achieved a wide frequency range for the Class series, they needed to address different volume requirements. To do this, they offered each cymbal in a choice of weights. But that posed its own set of problems.

"In the beginning," says Alex, "'H,' 'M,' and 'L' meant 'heavy,' 'medium,' and 'light.' Obviously, the heavier the cymbal, the higher and louder the sound; the lighter the cymbal, the lower and softer the sound. But other factors are involved. For example, the more bow the cymbal has, the higher the sound; the more flat the cymbal is, the lower the sound. When you combine these factors, you can find a heavy cymbal that sounds lower than a lighter cymbal. So classifying the cymbals by weight alone was not accurate. Today we're still using H, M, and L, but now to mean 'high,' 'medium,' and 'low.'

"When we developed our categories," Alex continues, "I found that this system could solve another problem. Drummers usually choose differently sized cymbals because they're looking for pitch differences. Smaller sizes react faster than larger sizes, and they aren't as loud. But most drummers don't differentiate between hitting a 14" crash and an 18". They hit all their cymbals in the same way. So either the 18" doesn't develop its full sustain and power, or the 14" gets overplayed, and often damaged.

"With the Class system, the sizes can be closer to each other. Drummers who would normally use 14", 16", and 18" crashes to get the different pitches they want can use



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a 15" high, a 16" medium, and a 17" low Class setup. They'll get the same tonality and frequency separation. But since the sizes are closer to each other and the weights are more appropriate to how the cymbals are being hit, the entire setup will sound more consistent and integrated."

Other Roto Cast Lines

Once UFIP had the characteristics of the Class series as a foundation, designing other lines became mainly a matter of deciding what to leave out. Alex starts with a description of the Natural series.

"The Natural was designed for 'traditional' players," he says. "It needed to be soft, smooth, and warm. We knew that cutting deep lathing grooves in the surface of a cymbal creates very aggressive overtones. If we left those deep grooves *out*, we'd get fewer overtones. So we don't lathe the tops of Natural cymbals at all, and we use only a very fine, shallow knife on the bottoms. As a result, a Natural cymbal sounds 'darker' than a Class cymbal, even though it has the same frequency range. The Natural also has a pretty soft attack. What you hear comes *after* you hit it—an expansion, rather than an explosion."

The Brilliant series is UFIP's pop/rock line. "It needs strong medium frequencies," says Alex, "because it has to compete with all the guitar sound. So we take off some of the high and low overtones by polishing the surface. Because of the heat involved, the surface gets harder, building up the medium frequencies. A slightly different hammering is also involved. The end result is a cymbal that mikes up well in studio or electronic applications."

The Bionic line looks similar to the Brilliant line, although it starts with heavier weights. "This time," says Alex, "we *added* some of the high overtones and took away some deep tones, in order to achieve a powerful, aggressive projection. The Bionic series gets the same hammering steps as the Natural, and the tapering is very similar. But the Bionic has double the thickness on the edges for greater durability. And it gets buffed to harden its surface."

Alex describes another important factor within the design of UFIP cymbals: the surface tension. "Think of a cymbal like a spring," he says. "When you hit it, you bend it down. The sound and response depend on how fast it comes back up. The vibration should be very fast to create good power and a wide frequency range. For that you need high tension on the surface. That's where the polishing on the Brilliant and Bionic lines comes in. If you want the opposite—low overtones and low pitch—you reduce the surface tension, and the cymbal vibrates slower. Slower vibrations equal lower pitch. We get that result with our "deep hammering" process, as on our Class and Natural models."

Standard Cast Lines

In addition to their professional-level Roto Cast lines, UFIP recently introduced two new entry-level lines, called Primo and Genio. The company refers to these cymbals as "Standard Cast," because they're made according to the standard process used by virtually all major manufacturers: Cast the disk, flatten it out, and then shape it into a cymbal.

Standard Cast cymbals start with castings made to UFIP's specifications in China, where raw materials are less expensive to purchase. UFIP has invested in a small, family-owned factory that does the

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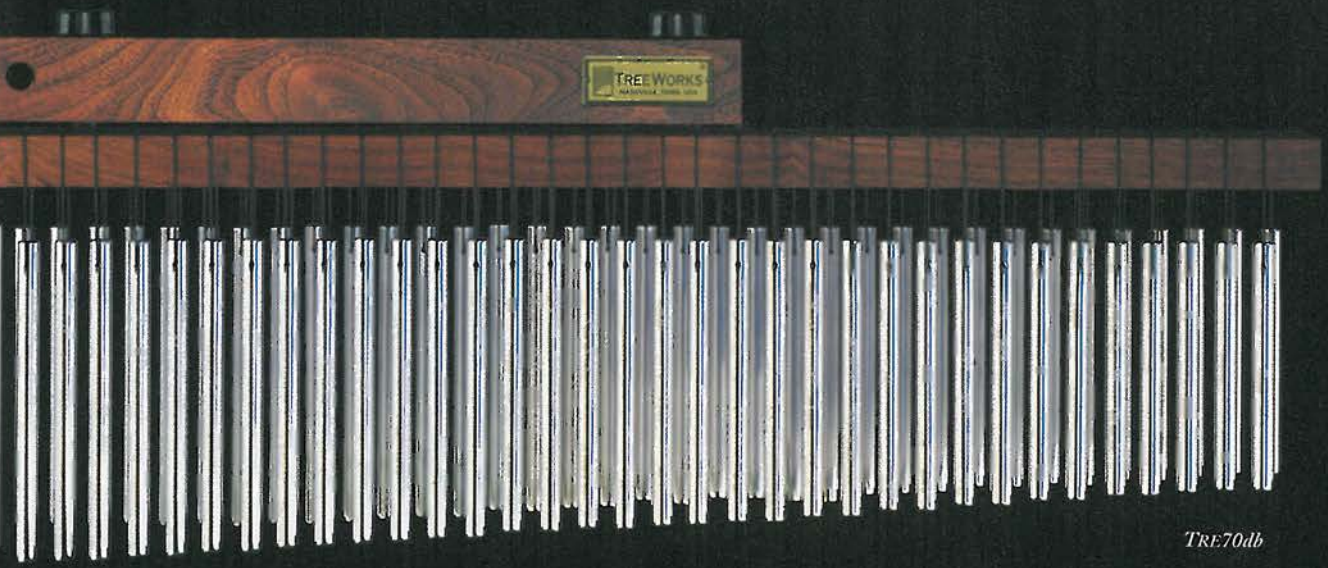

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casting, including the pressing of the cup. The blanks are then shipped to UFIP's facility in Hanover, Germany. There they receive their bow shape on a press, followed by the same first two hammering rounds that are given to Roto Cast cymbals in Pistoia. Then they are lathed. Many of these processes have been partially automated to further reduce cost.

The Primo line offers a very limited range of low-cost cast-cymbal models that are priced very aggressively. Says Alex, smiling, "This is a marketing package, period. In my personal opinion, Primo cymbals are far too good for their price."

The Genio series, on the other hand, is a general-purpose line offering a wide assortment of splashes, crashes, rides, Chinas, and hi-hats. Says Alex, "The overtones on Genios are very powerful for entry-level cymbals. That's because Genios are cast from an alloy very similar to B20. We call it B22-plus, because instead of having less tin—like the B8 alloy of most low-priced cymbals—it actually has *more* tin. This makes the material a little bit softer, so it has a tendency to sound a little darker.

"Because of the bell sizes and the bow shape," Alex goes on, "Genios are good enough to be professional cymbals. But they're still priced on the entry-level side. Stores are excited about the Genio line because of its quality for the price, and because of the fact that while a drummer might start with a pre-packaged setup for the sake of economy, that drummer can immediately add sizes and sounds."

The Gong Show

A look at the factory floor in Pistoia reveals steel circles that once served as molds for gongs and tam-tams. Those instruments are now made in a separate facility, using a centuries-old sand-casting process. Molds exist today for casting gongs up to 32" in diameter.

Gongs and tam-tams hold a special place in UFIP president Luigi Tronci's heart, and he is still involved in their creation. The company makes a wide selection of them, primarily for the symphonic market. "But," says Alex Mühlbauer, "we also do a lot of custom work for individual customers. We make gongs and tam-tams for drummers and percussionists who come up with some crazy ideas."

Cymbal Evolution

UFIP takes a sort of yin-yang approach to the development and introduction of new products. On the one hand, they're reluctant to introduce new model lines. On the other, they're eager to respond to requests for new cymbal *sounds*.

"Many manufacturers tend to bring out a new series every year," says Alex. "We don't do that. As the acoustic desires of the market change, we alter the sounds of our existing lines to meet those desires. For example, our Class range has existed for seventeen years. But the cymbals today sound nothing like the cymbals made seventeen years ago. Class cymbals are 15% heavier today, to meet the playing requirements of today's drummers. The molds, the lathing, and the hammering are all different. But we retain the series name and description because we think the musical goal of the line is still the same. Each of our lines was created to meet specific sound requirements. We don't want to change that approach."

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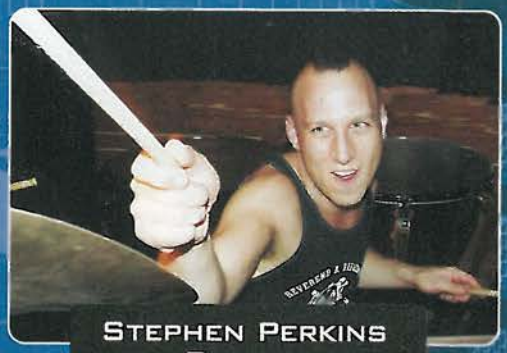
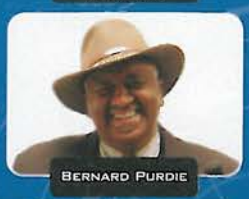


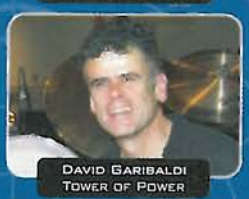
Stephen Perkins
Banyan

Travis Barker
Blink 182

Jabo Starks
Clyde Stubblefield



Bernard Purdie



David Garibaldi
Tower of Power

Rikki Rockett
Poison

Vicki Randle
Tonight Show Band

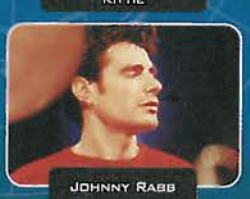
Stanton Moore
Galactic

Mercedes Lander
Kittie

Richie "Gajate" Garcia

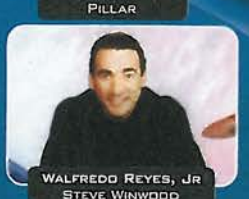
Lester Estelle
Pillar

Zoro
Lenny Kravitz



Johnny Rabb

Marco Minneman
Independent



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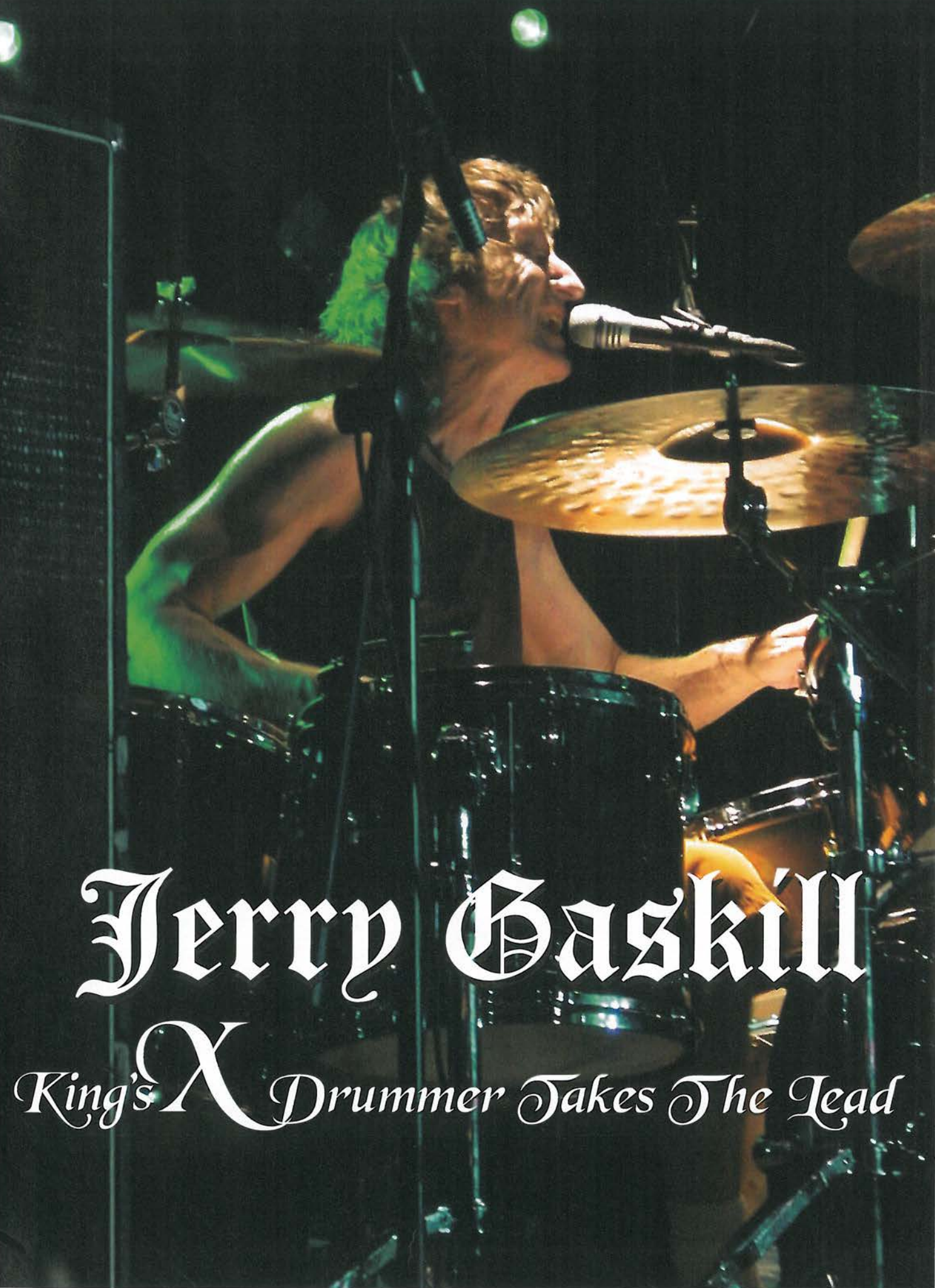


Jerry Gaskill

King's X Drummer Takes The Lead

Jerry Gaskill has always liked doing it the band way. After twenty-four years, the drummer still calls King's X his dream band. "I feel honored to play with Ty and Doug," he says. But with guitarist Ty Tabor involved in side projects such as Jughead, Platypus, and The Jelly Jam, and with bassist Doug Pinnick playing with Poundhound and Supershine, Gaskill saw his opportunity last year to step to the fore and record his first solo CD.

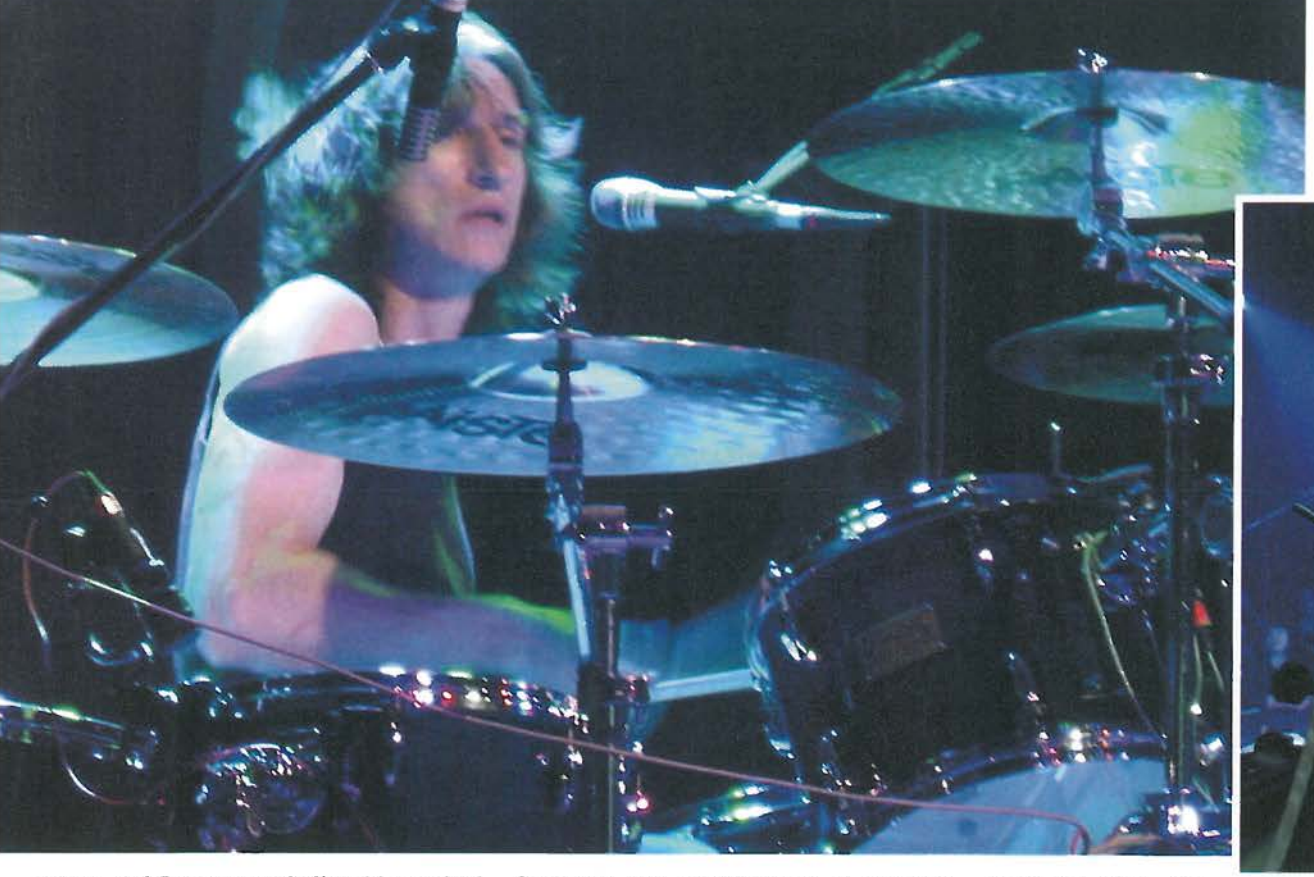
by Robin Tolleson

"I want to keep pace with Doug and Ty—and I want to be the sole ruler of the universe," Gaskill jokes. *Come Somewhere* will serve as evidence to many King's X fans as to what a significant part Gaskill has played in shaping the instrumental and vocal parts of the King's X sound. Doug Pinnick recently said that *Come Somewhere* made him jealous and proud at the same time. "Well, it's hard for me to find inspiration anywhere today," he says. "But *Come Somewhere* is very inspiring. It's like a good Beatles album. John and George should be proud."

In a phone interview from Nashville, Tennessee, where King's X is working on a new album with renowned producer Michael Wagener, Gaskill describes the songwriting process that led to *Come Somewhere*. "It's funny, the songs arrived in different ways," he suggests. "There were a couple of songs on the record where I'd wake up in the morning and be making breakfast for my son before he went to school, and a melody would just be in my head. I'd be singing this melody and figure, 'Well, I'd better go write a song.' Most every one of the songs was written on an acoustic guitar; I think only one was written on electric. As for drums, when I wrote these songs I had no drum ideas whatsoever. I wasn't even thinking drums, I was thinking *songs*."

Gaskill does most of the vocals, and he plays most of the acoustic guitar, piano, and drums on *Come Somewhere*. Jerry wrote the material as well. He and King's X guitarist Ty Tabor recorded and performed the whole CD at Tabor's Alien Beans Studio in Houston, Texas. The drums were frequently the last instrument to be recorded. "I was just focusing on writing a song," Gaskill says, "trying to get it the way I wanted it. For the drums, I guess I knew I'd figure them out."

Gaskill's father bought him a snare drum when he was very young, growing up in New Jersey. "I've been playing as long as I can remember," he says. "I do remember getting my first real drum at age four. My dad got me a



snare, and I was so unbelievably excited to have a real drum. I've been playing ever since."

Gaskill had great support from his family. In fact, from age seven to fifteen he played in a group with his father and brother. "We played all instrumental music," he says, "doing wedding receptions and lodges and other local stuff. There was one local band I'd go see when I was about twelve. They played a lot of pool parties, and I used to think they were gods, like I was watching Led Zeppelin or something. A couple of years later, they asked me to join the band. That was exciting. At that point my parents realized music was what I was going to do, and there wasn't anything they could do about it. Yeah, they totally supported me."

Gaskill practiced a lot, learning to play without studying privately or playing in the school band. He chose a "garage band education," but did take one applied percussion class in college. Gaskill's influences come mostly from three drummers. At forty-six, Jerry can vividly remember The Fab Four. "The Beatles were the first," he says. "They came to America, and that was it. There was nothing else to do but that. I think I was six. I saw *The Ed Sullivan Show* appearance. I was waiting—I *couldn't* wait for it—and the performance was unbelievable. It was like, what else is there to do other than be in a band and play music?

"Ringo was probably one of the first, if not *the* first, to inspire me about drumming," Gaskill says. "I love the way he played. He knew what to play and when to play it. That's what it's all about. And he did it live, and he was pounding. He's a rock drummer."

Gaskill saw Led Zeppelin twice, in 1970 and '72. "When I saw them in 1972," he says, "I had ninth-row seats on the floor at the Spectrum in Philadelphia, and they came on stage like gods. John Bonham came out there and did this incredible lick just to check his drums, and I thought, 'My god.' I learned so much from Bonham that night, and there I was, fourteen years old. That was a great learning experience."

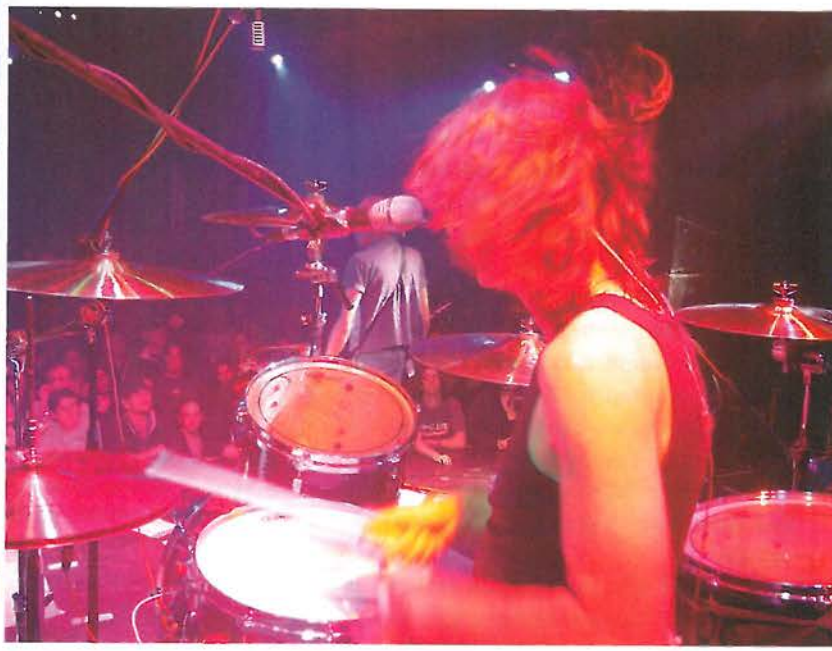
Laying back in the groove like Bonham is a challenge, playing huge but keeping it reined in. Gaskill does it on "Goldilox," the chunky, odd-time groove on 1988's *Out Of The Silent Planet*, on the soul-pop-metal masterpiece "Summerland," from *Gretchen Goes To Nebraska* (1989), and on "Crazy," from *Come Somewhere*. "It's not easy," Gaskill admits, "because we all have a tendency to get ahead of ourselves. I think that's a natural trait. We want to play, the adrenaline flows, and we want to get faster and faster. But you do have to learn how to lay back and stay in the pocket. I think the groove is the most important thing in rock 'n' roll. If it's not groovin', it's music that's just being played. You don't see any good bands with bad drummers. Bad drummers make bad bands.

"I'd say if I had to choose *one* drummer who was an influence," Gaskill continues, "it would be John Bonham. No doubt about it. Bonham and Buddy Rich, those two guys to me *are* drumming. That's what it's all about. Put those two together and you've got the perfect drummer...and that might be me! No, I'm joking," he laughs.

"There's a lick that Bonham does on 'Black Dog,' Jerry continues. "It sounds simple, but that's as badass a piece of drumming as has ever been recorded. And a lot of the stuff on their first record, like 'Good Times, Bad Times,' is amazing. There is some phenomenal Bonham stuff on the recent Zeppelin DVD too. It's like, a human being can't do that."

Listen to the out vamp on "L.A. Flight," from *Come Somewhere*, for a clear example of Buddy Rich's influence on Gaskill. "I saw Buddy when I was twelve or thirteen," he says, "and he was

"You don't see any good bands with bad drummers. Bad drummers make bad bands."



doing a roll with his left hand that was as good as any I'd ever seen anybody do with two hands. It was amazing—it didn't seem possible. So my standards are high. I'd catch Buddy on *The Tonight Show,* and it was perfect. Even when he messed up it was perfect, and he did mess up sometimes. He was human, after all."

Other drummers that influenced Gaskill early on were Don Brewer from Grand Funk Railroad, Carmine Appice with Cactus, and ELP's Carl Palmer. "These days there are so many great drummers," he says. "Shannon Larkin, who plays with Godsmack, is great. There are many more, obviously, but I'm more into the groove guys, drummers who play with great feeling and who don't necessarily play the most technical stuff. Most of my favorite drummers probably didn't take lessons. I know John and Buddy didn't, and I don't think Ringo did."

It's the rare drummer who can combine a high degree of chops with that degree of power and musicality. "I guess what's most important in my mind," Gaskill explains, "is the song itself. Every instrument has to fit. It's not a showcase for the individual, it's a showcase for the song. That's how each of us in King's X thinks, so therefore we just want to make sure the parts fit. That's how we approach our music."

The three members of King's X grew up in different parts of the country, moved to Springfield, Missouri for different reasons, and met in 1980. "We've been together for almost twenty-four years," Gaskill confirms. "It amazes us. It's been a really good thing. I'm very happy and thankful for it."

In 1979 Gaskill met Greg Volz, the lead singer with the band Petra. Volz asked him, as well as bassist Doug Pinnick, to join Petra, so they both moved to Missouri. The Petra deal fell apart before they ever played a show. However, guitarist Phil Keaggy heard that Jerry and Doug were available, and the two ended up playing together in Keaggy's band. "That was a great experience," Gaskill says. "I was a fan of Phil, and it was an honor to be in his band. But Doug and I decided, we've got to form our *own* band and do what we need to do, the way we need to do it."

In November of that year, Jerry and Doug met Ty Tabor, and the three started playing together. It wasn't long before King's X was born, and the band began to develop into a fearsome live attraction, with breathtaking instrumental and vocal displays. When Gaskill was asked to do something he'd never done—sing and play drums simultaneously—he stepped up mightily. "That was something that wasn't in my mind to do," he sighs. "Shortly before we did the first King's X record, I started singing a little bit, because we needed some more harmony. Once we started making the first record it was, You know you're singing on everything now. And I became a drummer/singer.

"At first it was a little difficult," Gaskill continues, "because vocal lines are not necessarily in the same rhythm as the drum part. But singing and drumming has become a natural thing for me. It's almost second-nature. It took a lot of practice at first. I can remember saying, I can't do this. But as you practice and do things over and over, you tap into what makes it work."

Gaskill must have a pretty good ear for pitch. "I remember [*Late Night* bandleader] Paul Shaffer came to one of our gigs in New York, and afterwards he hung out with us on our bus. He asked, 'What kind of samples are you guys using for your vocals?' We said, 'No, that's just us

Jerry Gaskill

singing,' and he could hardly believe it. He heard the song 'Born To Be Loved,' and he said he was going to go back and learn it for the show, and sure enough they play it on a regular basis now."

Among the other highlights in the bands' career, they performed at Woodstock II in 1994. (Check out the amazing live version of "Over My Head' on 1997's *Best Of King's X*.) They were also named one of VH1's top-100 hard rock bands of all time. Over the course of ten CDs, Gaskill explains, the band has gone through several songwriting processes. "We started off with each of us bringing songs to the band," Jerry recalls. "Then we would take them and decide what we wanted to do, apply our own ideas to them, and make them King's X songs. On the last three records, however, we decided to do something different and just write songs together completely from scratch."

The band has also moved well with advances in musical technology. *Manic Moonlight*, released in 2002, was the first King's X album to feature drum loops as well as live kit. "That was alright," Gaskill figures. "I was a little hesitant at first, but we were in a new place and thought, Let's try something different. I think loops have their place, though when it comes right down to it, we're a rock 'n' roll band. Loops can add some flavor, but I don't think they should be a main focus for us."

Black Like Sunday, the band's most recent studio release, contains reworkings of some of the first songs they ever wrote together, tunes that never made it onto a CD. Gaskill reports, "All of the songs except for maybe two were written

Gaskill plays Pearl drums, and his kit features a 22" kick, a 12" rack, and 14" and 16" floor toms. "That's my setup," he says. "It's a scaled-down John Bonham or Don Brewer kit. I've got a few different snares, but the one I use most of the time is a Slingerland Gregg Bissonette model, a great-sounding snare. It's a slightly deeper wood drum, a 6½".

"We were doing our *Ear Candy* record," Gaskill continues, "and Gregg actually came by with a bunch of snares for me to try. I ended up using his model, and it sounded amazing on the record. And then later, after the record came out, Gregg came up to me and said, 'Man, I heard the record, and there's no way I can play that snare ever again. It's *yours*.'"

Gaskill plays Paiste cymbals. "I used their Signature series for a long time—the Full crashes in particular—and then they came out with the Dimension line, so I started using some of them. But live, onstage, they didn't seem to be cutting through enough, so I went to some larger 2002s that cut through a little bit better. I was using 16", 17", and 18" crashes and a 20" ride. But recently I went up to 16", 18", and 20" crashes. I also use 14" Sound Edge hi-hats, either Signature or Dimension, depending on the room."

The drummer's sticks of choice are Vater 5B nylon tips. "They're perfect for me," Gaskill says. "The 5As are too small, and the 2Bs are a little too big. But the Vater 5B feels just right. And I prefer nylon tips, because wood tips always chip, and I can't get the detailed cymbal stuff I like to play with them."

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between 1980 and 1983, and we just put them aside and moved on. Then we thought, Hey, we've got all these songs. Let's listen to them and see if any of them are cool. We decided, Yeah, they *are* cool, so we made a whole record out of them. We pretty much left them as we wrote them, as far as the structure of the songs.

"Now we're in a studio in Nashville with producer Michael Wagener [Master Of Puppets, Dokken, Skid Row, White Lion], working on a new record. This time we went back to the old way of just bringing songs in and reworking them into King's X songs. I think we're realizing that's the way we need to make records. I'm really excited about it.

"We first heard of Michael through a band called Accept," Gaskill continues, "especially their song 'Balls To The Wall.' We heard that and said, 'Wow, that's what a record is supposed to sound like.' To be working with him is just amazing. It's a great environment here in Nashville, out in the middle of nowhere. We're all very happy about it. I can't wait for the record to come out. There's one tune where we definitely get that Bonham thing happening."

King's X does a lot of live shows, and as a singing drummer Gaskill is quite aware of his stage monitor mix. "I have some kick drum in my monitor," he says, "and a pretty good amount of guitar so I can hear pitch. I have very little bass, but I do have all the vocals—just enough to hear what I'm doing and find the pitch. I like to keep it simple. Nobody's perfect on stage, and I like to tone it down as much as I can, just feel what I'm feelin', and not be distracted by what somebody's playing somewhere else." To get a taste of King's X in action, check out their brand-new disc, *Live All Over The Place*.

"Recording is totally different from playing live," Gaskill states. "Live, I can play what I feel. I'm not worried about a click or anything. But I want to be solid in the studio, so we use a click. I like playing to a click in the studio, because that way I know it's going to be solid and in the groove. Live, you can get away with a lot of things that you can't in the studio. It's two totally different ballgames. In the studio everything that you do is going to be heard, good and bad."

Gaskill usually uses a cowbell for his click sound, and prefers to have 8th notes to play off of. "Eighth notes keep it a little bit more steady," Gaskill offers, "rather than just quarter notes. I like hearing that constant pulse going. In my recording experience, I always feel like I don't do as well as I could have. I hear myself and go, Oh man, I should have done this, I shouldn't have done that.

"That said, I'm happy to have my own CD out there. It's something that's been inside of me for a while, and it had to be done. I'd love for people to get a hold of it, hear it, and fall in love with it. But if they don't, what can I do? To become the sole ruler of the universe, you've gotta take those steps!"

Gaskill hasn't lost his sense of humor, obviously, or his passion for playing music. "Ultimately," he states, "that's what it takes. Anybody who's going to last, and continue this as a career, has to do it whether you're making money at it or not. It's just something you *have* to do. That's definitely where I'm at."

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Gibraltar's 9600 Series is an all-new line of heavy-duty professional hardware. Straight and Hideaway Boom cymbal stands feature newly designed double-braced tripod bases to better facilitate multi-stand setups, as well as a choice between a 360° ball tilter or the new gearless Brake tilter for virtually unlimited cymbal positioning. Straight stands list for $125.50; Hideaway Boom stands list for $157.50.

Three 9600 snare stands include one with an Ultra Adjust gearless basket, a second with a pivot ball basket, and a no-leg version for easy rack setups. The legged models feature double-braced bases with small footprints that allow for extra floor space, and are fitted with Gibraltar's wide-grip Super Feet. Legged stands list for $146.50; the legless version (with Ultra-Adjust basket) is priced at $104.50.

New 9600 series hi-hat stands feature double-braced tripod bases with a choice of fully adjustable moveable legs, a dual-leg version with a patented "mini" third leg, or a no-leg version for easy rack setups. A choice of Liquid Drive or Direct Drive is available, and all pedals are supported by Gibraltar's Rock stabilizer plate with quick release. A no-leg model with Direct Drive is priced at $157.50; with Liquid Drive it's $188.50. A moveable-tripod version with Direct Drive lists for $178.50; with Liquid Drive it's $209.50. A dual-leg model with Direct Drive is priced at $209.50; with Liquid Drive it's $240.50.

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The Coda modular drumstick system allows drummers and percussionists to create their "perfect drumstick" from component parts. Users can vary weight, balance, inertia, rebound, and ergonomics to control the feel of the sticks. They can also choose from a range of striking elements, including stick tips, mallet heads, and brushes, in order to control the sound.

The interchangeable drumsticks are molded from an advanced carbon-fiber polymer, said to possess high flex strength as well as stiffness and impact strength. The modules are divided into two main sections: the handle and the front striking element. Various weights can be installed at the rear, middle, and front, to alter the balance point, overall stick weight, and inertia (response). The system is said to be so versatile that drummers can even customize different sticks for each hand.

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You can get microscopic with the DR-880, but you also have the option of taking the simple route with its three EZ Compose buttons on the front panel, which allow original patterns to be constructed without note-by-note programming hassles. Patterns can be taken deeper with the Groove Modify feature, where various groove and triplet feels can be applied. Ghost notes can also be added automatically.

In addition to an array of analog audio I/O, the DR-880 also has a S/PDIF digital out and a USB port for MIDI interfacing and SMF Data import. The unit lists for $549.

On a smaller scale, the new BOSS DB-60 is a handy timekeeper that can lay down a click in style. Along with the standard functions of a metronome, the DB-60 provides a menu of rhythmic patterns, a note-mixing feature to create rhythms that match the feel and style of your music, and the ability to handle time signatures of up to 17 beats per measure.

Other highlights include the DB-60's Memory function, which stores independent tempos for each song, a Loop Play function, Tap Tempo, a Standard Pitch mode for tuning instruments, a volume control, and a backlit display. You can also set the length of your practice sessions with the onboard Timer and Stopwatch functions. List price is $89.

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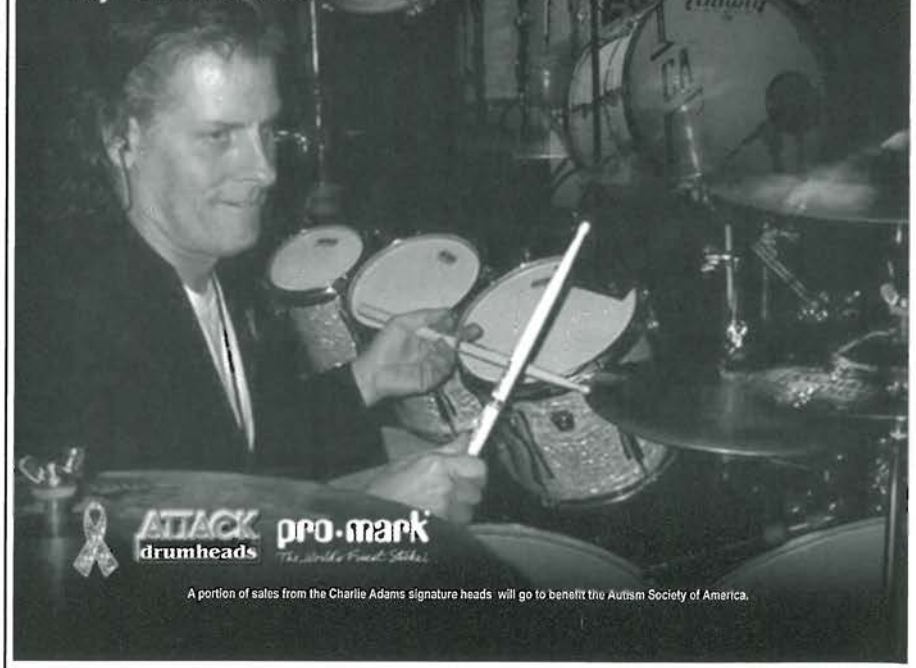

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VIC FIRTH has redesigned the Matt Cameron signature drumstick to be shorter and lighter, to reflect Matt's current approach to playing the drums. The new sticks are said to promote a wide dynamic range. They feature a 5B-style shaft (.585" diameter) with an elongated taper and an overall length of 16 3/16". The barrel tip is said to produce a full and satisfying cymbal sound. List price is $13.50 per pair.

Also new from Vic Firth is the Arthur Hull Drum Circle Facilitator stick. This stick was designed for people who facilitate recreational drum circles and rhythm-based events. The white-stained maple stick is easy to see, and thus can be used as a conductor's baton. It's said to be excellent for playing on a bomba bell, djun djun, or dun dun. The stick measures 16½" long and .690" in diameter, and is sold singly at $8.
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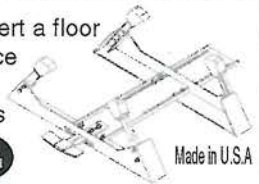
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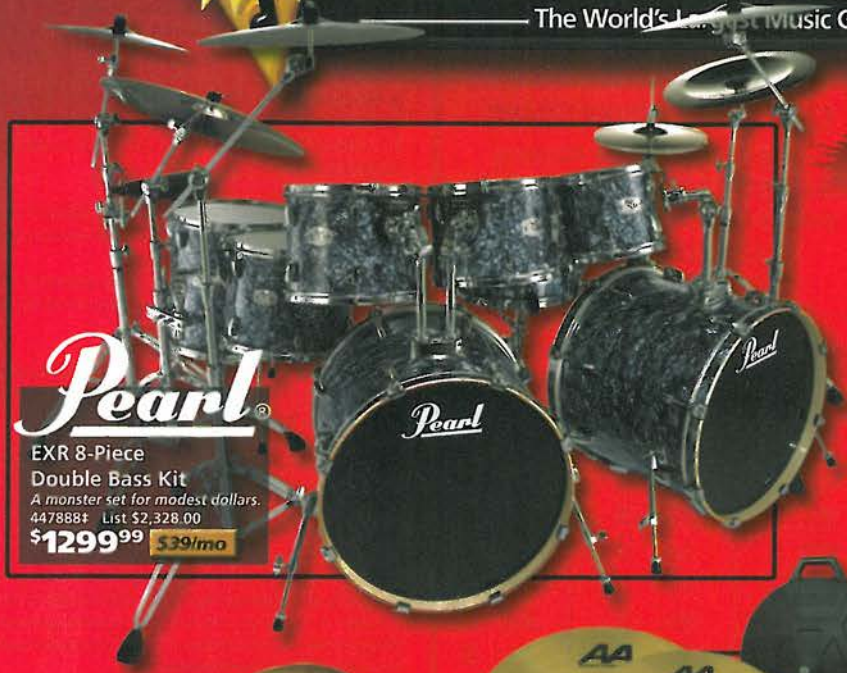

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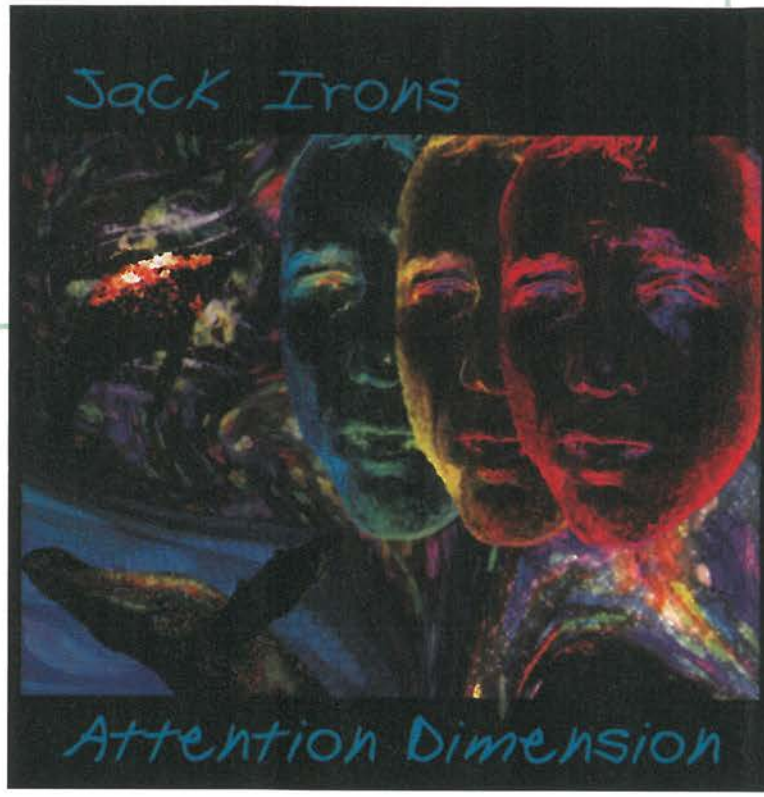
RECORDINGS

rating scale (poor ◂ ▸ classic)

Jack Irons
Attention Dimension (Breaching Whale)



Playing everything from marimba to timpani to synth, former Pearl Jam/Chili Peppers drummer Jack Irons has created a remarkably individualistic statement of intent that is anything but "a drummer's album." Drawing on Middle Eastern, African tribal, electronic, and rock music, Irons crosses cultures with a knowing hand and such skill that *Attention Dimension* sounds like the inspired debut of some musical wunderkind, not the effort of a grizzled veteran. Irons' drumming is intricate and multifaceted, whether he's playing a drum corps cadence or a contrapuntal polyrhythmic tribal pattern. But it's his deeply layered and swirling compositions that stick with you. **Ken Micallef**

Geri Allen
The Life Of A Song (Telarc)

Don Byron
Ivey-Divey (Blue Note)

Few drummers reach the lofty peak of being an icon. Even fewer *continue* growing through the decades. **JACK DEJOHNETTE** is that rare artist. On *The Life Of A Song*, pianist **Geri Allen** and star bassist **Dave Holland** spark Jack's aggressive, hard swinging side. The adventurous Allen sports a powerful attack, expansive harmonies, and challenging tunes that offer fertile ground for Jack's explosive interplay. Strong stuff.

Don Byron's latest brings out alternate shades in Jack's palette. The innovative clarinetist/tenor man's music is sophisticated yet garnished with winsome fun. The centerpiece tunes are culled from Lester Young's bass-less trio repertoire. In this same format, Jack has huge space for kit "composing," weaving imaginative textures and stretching boundaries. Check out his singular brushwork on "I Want To Be Happy." A fresh delight. **Jeff Potter**

Chick Corea Elektric Band To The Stars (Stretch)

Legendary keyboardist/composer Chick Corea reunites the stellar crew of the original Elektric Band for a celestial return to planet Fusion. On *To The Stars*, Corea explores Latin, Afro-Cuban, African, and jazz-rock instrumental compositions based on characters and places from the L. Ron Hubbard sci-fi novel of the same name. Veteran rhythmic pioneer **DAVE WECKL** energizes the partially complex, partially groove-oriented material with a mature, relaxed feel, illustrating his extraordinary ability to creatively orchestrate melodies within a rhythmically advanced framework. This group of gifted explorers is still light years ahead in the scientific musical universe. **Mike Haid**

The Jelly Jam 2 (InsideOut)

The Jelly Jam, one of King's X guitarist/vocalist **Ty Tabor**'s side projects, features Dream Theater bassist **John Myung** and the graceful, ageless **ROD MORGENSTEIN** on drums. At this point, Morgenstein has to be considered one of the greatest all-around drummers ever. With his feel, advanced techniques, and highly musical style, it would be hard to imagine more perfect ideas than what he's developed for this music. Beatle-esque vocals, powerful pop hooks, adventurous musicianship—The Jelly Jam is what top-notch pop music is made of. **Mike Haid**

Mike Watt The Secondman's Middle Stand (Columbia)

Written during Mike Watt's recuperation from a serious illness a few years ago, *Middle Stand*'s songs sound like a fever dream; the solid rock underpinnings, shifting time signatures, and herky-jerky arrangements of songs like "Burstedman" are reminiscent of the glory days of Pere Ubu. Watt has a soulmate in his inspired drummer. **JERRY TREBOTIC** scuttles around his kit like a collision between Barriemore Barlow and Keith Moon, his tumbling tom-tom fills propelling the trio through its prog-meets-punk arrangements. On the tumultuous "Pissbags And Tubing," he even achieves percussive nirvana by making 7/8 time swing. **Steve Goulding**

Significant Reissues by Ken Micallef

Slapp Happy/ Henry Cow, Nektar

Joined at the hip by criminally ignored drummer **CHRIS CUTLER**, German oddballs Slapp Happy and innovative British art rockers Henry Cow met for merriment on 1975's *Desperate Straights*. Cutler bashes gleefully but craftily throughout. (R&R)

Founded in the early '70s, Britain's Nektar gets the reissue treatment on their first several albums, complete with SACD mixes and unreleased tracks. A leviathan of prog rock potency that pillaged epic arrangements, Nektar overcame primitive technique with great imagination and psychedelic pomposity. Drummer **RON HOWDEN** held the band aloft with minimal groove-oriented playing, striking a balance between ethereal fantasias and fireball acid rock. (Eclectic/Dream Nebula)

Extreme Beats by Jeff Perlah

Raunchy, Lunaris, Uphill Battle, Spastic Ink

Despite their lame name, Raunchy whip up smart, explosive metal bearing a futuristic vibe. On *Confusion Bay*, the Danes' second album, **MORTEN TOFT HANSEN** brings rhythmic flair to the band's robust riffs, creepy keyboards, and radio-friendly melodies. (Nuclear Blast)

Featuring members of Borknager and Spiral Architect, Norway's **Lunaris** offers an intriguing mixture of vicious black/death metal, surgical prog-rock, dreamy symphonics, and utter oddness. Throughout their sophomore effort, *Cyclic*, **JANOS Di CROCE** shows what extreme, insane drumming is all about. (Earache)

Speaking of musical lunacy, Uphill Battle's maniacal hardcore and weird prog/jazz might have you booking more shrink appointments than you can afford. During their second album, *Wreck Of Nerves*, you'll have trouble getting **DANNY WALKER**'s schizoid tempos and the group's deranged yelps out of your head. (Relapse)

BOBBY JARZOMBEK drummed for Halford and is now with Iced Earth. He also plays in Spastic Ink, a bolt-tight prog/metal outfit that noodles in a way that isn't dorky. On the band's second album, *Ink Compatible*, Jarzombek's expert chops are not only spastic, but extremely catchy. (Eclectic Electric)

Fu Manchu Start The Machine (DRT)

Guitar-drenched production and broad-shouldered rhythms have been standard fare on Fu Manchu albums since the act's debut over a decade ago. *Start The Machine* is no exception. Now with drummer **SCOTT REEDER** behind the kit, pummeling all kinds of no-nonsense, syncopated rock phrases, the California foursome's blend of desert-rock fuzz and South Bay punk becomes even more obvious. And when Reeder kicks it up, he puts on a remarkable show. Whether it's his bridge setup on "Tunnel Vision" or the transitional intro of "Understand," the drummer manages to impress, all the while preserving a truly earnest vibe.

Waleed Rashidi

Charlie Watts And The Tentet

Watts At Scott's (Black Box/Sanctuary)

Blistering bop, big band–like assaults, chamber-style passages—this double-disc live set from 2001 runs the gamut of Rolling Stone drummer Charlie Watts' "other" career. As The Tentet blows through originals and covers of Monk, Miles, Ellington, and The Stones, Watts' ride cymbal blankets the foreground like gentle rain, as percussionist **LUIS JARDIM** expels the rhythmic equivalent of thunderclaps. Nine minutes in, the sixteen-minute standout track, "Elvin's Song," explodes with exciting African polyrhythms. There's nary a trace of Elvin's style in it, but Watts' relaxed and natural feel is far more rewarding than copped chops could ever be.

Will Romano

Big Satan Souls Saved Hear (Thirsty Ear)

Featuring drumming that at various times provides momentum and commentary to spiraling alto sax and guitar lines, settles into a groove, or chatters away in a fractured, free manner, *Souls Saved Hear* offers plenty of texture. A collaborative trio made up of drummer **TOM RAINEY**, guitarist **Marc Ducret**, and saxophonist **Tim Berne**, Big Satan creates challenging, thoughtful improvised music. The makeup of this group allows Rainey to have an equal role, alternately offering support, collectively exploring with his bandmates, or taking the lead. Overall, a successful demonstration of contemporary experimental jazz.

Martin Patmos

Brian Woodbury

Variety Orchestra (Some Phil)

Drummers **DAN MORRIS** and **JONATHAN FEINBERG** have their hands full with Woodbury's Variety Orchestra. These songs are like cartoon soundtracks, full of intricate time and dynamics shifts. Whether in the style of a bolero, polka, or mariachi, the arrangements are exotic and exciting. Woodbury has the gift of evoking strong feelings, whether he's being amusing, touching, or experimental. At every turn, the drums enforce the mood. On "Long May She Wave," for example, Morris begins on brushes alongside the sweet violin of **Sarah Parkins**, then switches to sticks for a playful second-line section full of rhythmic sleight of hand. (info@somephil.com)

Robin Tolleson

Rick Peckham

Left End (Perfected)

On his debut album, guitarist Rick Peckham winds his way through adventurous compositions that merge ideas from jazz and classic '70s rock. Playing a funky, dirty, raw guitar that at times evokes a lonely Midwest sound reminiscent of Bill Frisell or Pat Metheny, Peckham nonetheless shows himself to be an improviser full of unique ideas. Working within a trio format gives everyone room to play, and bassist **Tony Scherr** and drummer **JIM BLACK** are perfect musical partners. Black in particular turns in an exceptional performance that is angular and grooving, simultaneously pushing boundaries and offering support.

Martin Patmos

Steve Smith & Vital Information

Come On In (Tone Center)

Steve Smith continues to focus on combining traditional American musical styles with a universal rhythmic spotlight centered on the swing pulse. Throughout *Come On In*, he bends the groove freely while connecting with the melodies and rhythmic changes. He also tries his hand at ethnic percussion here, with two tracks performed on Udu drum. Smith has reached a polyrhythmic mastery that few drummers today possess. Most notable in this batch of tunes is the multicultural "Baton Rouge," featuring South Indian motifs and Smith soloing effortlessly in 5/4. This band has reached a level of sophisticated musical communication that's nearly spiritual.

Mike Haid

Beat Box by Ed King

Heiruspecs

With obvious influence from West Coast hip-hop, Heiruspecs' new release, *A Tiger Dancing*, proves that "real" music is alive and well, even in this highly mechanized genre. **PETER LEGGETT**'s drums provide everything they should on a record of this type: dirt, presence, and thump. The only thing refreshingly missing is your everyday kick on 1 / snare on 2 *boom-bap*, which has its place but needs to be lost once in a while. Further, unrecognizable sounds sometimes take the place of traditional percussion, giving the album a surprisingly creative edge. Elsewhere, compression and gated reverb keep the snare fresh and the rimshots new. *A Tiger Dancing* gives one faith that there's effective live hip-hop beyond The Roots. (www.Heiruspecs.com)

DVDs

From Afro-Cuban To Rock

featuring Raul Rekow and Karl Perazzo (LP)

level: all, $23.95

Santana percussionists Raul Rekow and Karl Perazzo demonstrate here how to apply traditional Afro-Cuban rhythms and instruments to modern Latin rock. There's plenty here for the beginner/intermediate player (basic techniques, rhythms, instruments), and there is a boatload of advanced material as well. While the focus is on how the conga player works with the timbale player (plus bass, traps, and keyboard), every musician can learn from this video. Even non-players can benefit, learning to appreciate all the interlocking rhythmic roles of one of America's most cherished Latin-rock supergroups. **Bill Kiely**

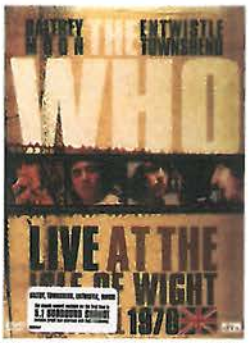
Tommy Igoe Groove Essentials (Hudson Music)

level: all, $24.99

Throughout *Groove Essentials*' three hours, Tommy Igoe's teaching style is right-on: Beyond explicitly dictating what a drummer should do in any given situation, Igoe inspires one to think, play, and explore the instrument in its totality. From rock, jazz, and hip-hop to world-music beats, this DVD literally and figuratively illustrates the New York powerhouse drummer's philosophy. With a common-sense approach, Igoe emphasizes the "connective tissue" of grooves and how they can be applied or permutated in a given setting. If forced to be critical, I'd wish that more of this material was aimed at advanced students. But Tommy provides such a great doorway to what can be done, it's really up to a player's imagination how far his tutelage can take you. **Sean Enright**

The Who

Live At The Isle Of Wight Festival 1970 (Eagle)



Filmed at The Who's peak and featuring remastered audio and video, *Live At The Isle Of Wight Festival* provides an intense look at the madness that was **KEITH MOON**. Chugging 8th notes on his bass drums and flailing his toms and cymbals like a conductor on LSD, Moon matched his drumming with idiotic expressions and body contortions. He seems to barely touch the drums, but the impact of his mammoth sound is undeniable. A bonus interview with Pete Townshend provides typically cutting and essential commentary from the bandleader. **Ken Micallef**

Close-Up On Congas, Vol. 1

featuring Richie "Gajate" Garcia (LP)

level: beginner to intermediate, $23.95

In this DVD update of an earlier video, percussionist Richie "Gajate" Garcia knows that many conga players suffer from one glaring deficit: lack of fundamentals. We have the gear but we have no background...we love to play but we've missed the essential ABC's. Garcia presents this vital information—basic sounds, valuable exercises, essential rhythms, and playing "in clave"—in a way that is fun and challenging to beginners and intermediate players alike. And three cheers to LP for including an accompanying booklet, making this a true learning package. **Bill Kiely**

BOOKS

It's About Time by Fred Dinkins (Warner Bros.)

level: intermediate to advanced, $24.95 (with two CDs)

It's About Time deals with the recurring issue that every drummer deals with, no matter how talented he or she is: time. Dinkins starts out by developing independence between all four limbs, then adding a fifth "limb"—your voice. This may not be a traditional way to practice, but it can be very effective. Soon the reader is moving on to subdivisions, developing a sense of space, fills, time movement/feel, and grooving in 3/4. All 104 pages are easy to read, and each lesson is accompanied by an audio track. Other nice features include numbered exercises and tempo markings. Dinkins even includes a chapter on playing along with a horn section. The average rock drummer may not immediately relate to this, but playing along with other bandmembers' accents is extremely useful. A final chapter called "Time Maze" ties together all of the previous exercises. **Fran Azzarto**

Rush: Contents Under Pressure

by Martin Popoff (ECW Press)

level: all, $19.95

Canadian journalist Popoff challenges the legendary Canadian progressive rock trio to time-travel backwards and reminisce about their illustrious career. Amid rare photos by Rush photographer Andrew MacNaughtan, Alex, Geddy, and Neil reveal their likes, dislikes, triumphs, and frustrations during three decades of making exploratory progressive rock. Though not quite as juicy as any given Zeppelin or Who biography, this is still a revealing read for fans of the hard-working trio, who continue to uphold the integrity of talent, discipline, positive lyrical imagery, and dedication to the perfection of their craft. (www.ecwpress.com) **Mike Haid**

The Musician's Guide To Recording Drums by Dallan Beck (Hal Leonard)

level: all, $19.95 (with CD)

The Musician's Guide To Recording Drums is a thorough, easy-to-read text covering all aspects of drum recording, from equipment basics, to signal processing, to digital editing. The chapters progress logically from a simple two-microphone approach to more complex setups, offering many helpful hints along the way. The illustrations are clear and the accompanying CD provides excellent audio demonstrations for each topic. Although not a *perfect* resource—there are a few typos, missing tracks, and a lop-sided focus on contemporary drum sounds—*The Musician's Guide* is indispensable for those of us struggling to capture killer drum sounds in the not-so-killer project studio. **Michael Dawson**

Get Locked: The Ultimate Guide To Creating A Solid Rhythm Section

by Greg Hyatt and Stan Mitchell (Alfred)

level: intermediate, $14.95 (with CD)

Get Locked is a great workbook for the intermediate drummer and bassist who are looking to demystify the near telepathic hook-up of the most legendary rhythm sections. The book progresses through a series of topics, from basic music theory and technique to constructing a groove from scratch, with tons of thought-provoking ideas along the way. Such advanced concepts as "the art of listening," "using silence and sound," and "creating sonic textures" provide enough food for thought to inspire hours in the woodshed honing your grooves. Plus, many different styles are broken down and demonstrated on the accompanying CD. An excellent resource. **Michael Dawson**

To hear many of the artists reviewed in this month's *Critique*, be sure to tune in to www.moderndrummer.com.

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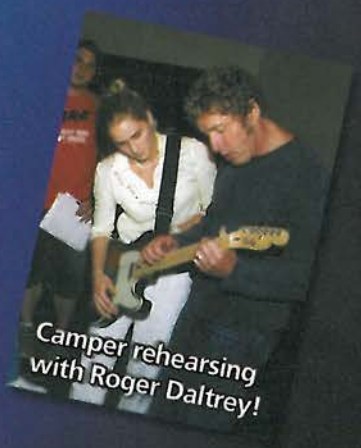

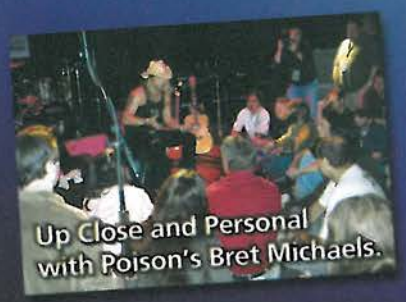

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Kenny Buttrey

Nashville's Quiet Giant

It's been said of Kenny Buttrey that he was "that rare, one-in-a-million kind of musician whose mere presence in a recording session eased the mind and steadied the course of many a musical legend." Buttrey, one of the most influential session drummers of the 1960s and '70s, died this past Sunday, September 12, after a long battle with cancer. He was fifty-nine.

Buttrey worked much of his career in Nashville studios, providing the percussion for albums including Jimmy Buffett's *Changes In Latitudes, Changes In Attitudes* (which yielded the super-hit "Margaritaville"), Linda Ronstadt's *Silk Purse*, and Neil Young's *Harvest*. Besides helping to create such hits as "Old Man" and "Heart Of Gold," Kenny also toured with Young.

Buttrey is particularly known for his work with Bob Dylan. His distinctive stamp is on Dylan's *Blonde On Blonde*, *Nashville Skyline*, *John Wesley Harding*, and *Self-Portrait* albums. In a retrospective of Bob Dylan's recorded work, *Village Voice* critic Robert Christgau wrote, "Though Dylan has known great rhythm sections (in Muscle Shoals, and, especially, The Band), his seminal rock records were cut with Nashville cats on drums—Kenny Buttrey when [Dylan] was lucky, nonentities when he wasn't."

A list of other artists with whom Buttrey recorded is as remarkable for its diversity as it is for its length. Notable names include Elvis Presley, Bob Seger, Dan Fogelberg, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Donovan, J.J. Cale, Joan Baez, Kris Kristofferson, The Everly Brothers, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, The Beau Brummels, Steve Goodman, John Hammond, The Pointer

One Legendary Dylan Drummer On Another

Jim Keltner Describes A Classic Buttrey Session

Kenny Buttrey played on many great songs throughout his recording career—the kind of songs that you never tire of hearing. One of my very favorites is "Lay Lady Lay" by Bob Dylan, which was recorded at CBS Studios in Nashville.

The way Kenny played that song is the epitome of creative simplicity. So when I first met Kenny, the first thing I asked him about was "Lay Lady Lay" and the part that he played. He told me that during the session he was trying to figure out what he was going to play. So he asked Bob, "What do *you* think I should play on this?" Bob kind of looked out into space, and then looked back at Kenny and said, "How about bongos?"

Now, if you know Bob, that was a typically funny answer from him, meaning, "You're the drummer, what are you asking *me* for?" But for Kenny, it started the wheels rolling. So he went to the studio's janitor (who happened to be Kris Kristofferson) and asked if there were any bongos or cowbells lying around anywhere. Kris showed him to a closet full of percussion, and Kenny found a cowbell that he liked. He took it back to the drumset, but couldn't figure out where to put it. There was nothing to attach it to. So what wound up happening was that Kris Kristofferson held the cowbell as Kenny played that beautiful little part on the verses. That's why the drums sound distant when they come in for the first time—because the concern was miking the cowbell.

In defense of the engineer, this was typical of a Dylan session. If there were things Bob liked about the performance and the track, then he kept it, no matter whether the sound was weird, or the song hadn't yet been totally figured out by all the musicians.

A lot of great records from back in the day were made that way, including a lot of Neil Young's recordings. Kenny also played on some of Neil's greatest records. Kenny Buttrey's playing truly epitomized the simplicity that is so important and complementary to this music. ●

Here's a very abbreviated list of recordings that featured Kenny Buttrey's unique touch on the drums.

Artist	Recording
Area Code 615	Area Code 615
Area Code 615	Trip In The County
Joan Baez	Any Day Now
Joan Baez	One Day At A Time
Beau Brummels	Bradley's Barn
Bobby Bare	Talk Me Some Sense
Barefoot Jerry	Southern Delight
Jimmy Buffett	Changes In Latitudes, Changes In Attitudes
J.J. Cale	Troubadour
Bob Dylan	Blonde On Blonde
Bob Dylan	John Wesley Harding
Bob Dylan	Nashville Skyline
Bob Dylan	Self Portrait
Dan Fogelberg	Phoenix
Al Kooper	I Stand Alone
Leo Kottke	Mudlark
Lonnie Mack	Hills Of Indiana
Harvey Mandel	Cristo Redentor
Ronnie Milsap	Ronnie Milsap
Kris Kristofferson	Border Lord
Gordon Lightfoot	Summer Side Of Life
Oak Ridge Boys	Room Service
Peter, Paul & Mary	Peter, Paul & Mary Album
Elvis Presley	Elvis 1956
Elvis Presley	He Touched Me
Linda Ronstadt	Silk Purse
John Stewart	Fire In The Wind
Jerry Jeff Walker	It's A Good Night For Singin'
Neil Young	Harvest
Neil Young	Tonight's The Night
Neil Young	Harvest Moon

Sisters, Jerry Jeff Walker, Mickey Newbury, Jesse Winchester, Waylon Jennings, Tom Jones, and The Oak Ridge Boys. He's also on Robert Knight's hit R&B single "Everlasting Love."

Kenny began his drumming career with Charlie McCoy & The Escorts, a popular local band that performed frequently in the Printers Alley club district of Nashville. Later, he co-founded the groups Area Code 615 and Barefoot Jerry, both of which featured some of Nashville's top studio players. Area Code 615 never broke big nationally—they only played in public twice—but their "Stone Fox Chase" instrumental was adopted as the theme for BBC-TV's *Old Grey Whistle Test* in the 1970s, and their *Trip In The Country* album has remained a favorite among musicians. Barefoot Jerry, on the other hand, was popular in Japan and Europe, once playing thirty-one straight sold-out concerts at Paris's Olympia Theatre.

Kenny was as highly regarded for his production and arranging skills as he was for his drumming. On Linda Ronstadt's critically hailed *Silk Purse*—which arguably spawned her solo career with the ballad "Long, Long Time"—Kenny served as arranger and conductor in addition to doing the drumming.

Nashville recording artist Ken Lauber remembers Kenny Buttrey's contributions to his first solo album and to the Area Code 615 sessions that followed. "We all recorded together for my first solo album, *Ken Lauber Contemplation View*," says Lauber. "Bob Dylan had worked with some of the guys on his *Nashville Skyline* album six months before, and he suggested that I work with them on my album. We cut it in three days. Then we formed AC615 and cut those tracks in about a week.

"All of the players were great," Lauber continues. "But Kenny Buttrey added something that really hasn't been heard since: a kind of 'arranged jam' back-up that later became the AC615 format. Buttrey really did most of the arranging right from the drums. He always did that on sessions. He was probably the only real drummer/bandleader/arranger that Nashville ever knew."

The Whole Drum Truth Concert

A stellar gathering of jazz drumming talent took place this past September 17, when **Albert "Tootie" Heath**, **Ben Riley**, **Ed Thigpen**, and **Jackie Williams** joined forces at Yale University's Sprague Memorial Hall in New Haven, Connecticut to perform as The Whole Drum Truth. The program was presented under the auspices of Yale's Duke Ellington Fellowship. That organization's inaugural celebration, presented in 1972, featured Max Roach, Papa Jo Jones, Sonny Greer, and Kenny Clarke. Not since then have four drummers appeared together.

The audience entered to see four drumkits, set up in a semicircle on an otherwise bare stage. Drumming alone was to be the focus of the evening. But a "chopsfest" it was definitely *not*. Instead, the talented gentlemen played individually, in pairs, in trios, and as a full quartet on a variety of original and standard compositions. The rhythmic melodies of tunes like "Salt Peanuts," "All Blues," and "St. Thomas" were readily apparent, while more abstract compositions by each of the drummers showcased their skills with sticks, brushes, mallets, and bare hands.

A particular highlight was the first-act closer: an extremely musical solo composition by Jackie Williams titled "Rhythmic Journey." Though he is probably the least well known of the evening's artists, Williams' dynamic performance won the audience over and brought them to their feet.

At the opening of the second act, Duke Ellington Fellowship director Willie Ruff presented gold medals (bearing Ellington's likeness) to Ben Riley, Ed Thigpen, and Jackie Williams, in honor of their contributions to jazz. (Tootie Heath was given his medal in 2003 as part of The Heath Brothers.) Later, after several more solo and group numbers, the full ensemble joined to perform "The Whole Drum Truth Samba," closing the show on a note of sheer joy and percussive intensity.

Rick Van Horn

Ellington Fellowship director Willie Ruff (left) presented the drummers with gold medals in recognition of their contributions to jazz.

Al Ginter Percussion Drum Event

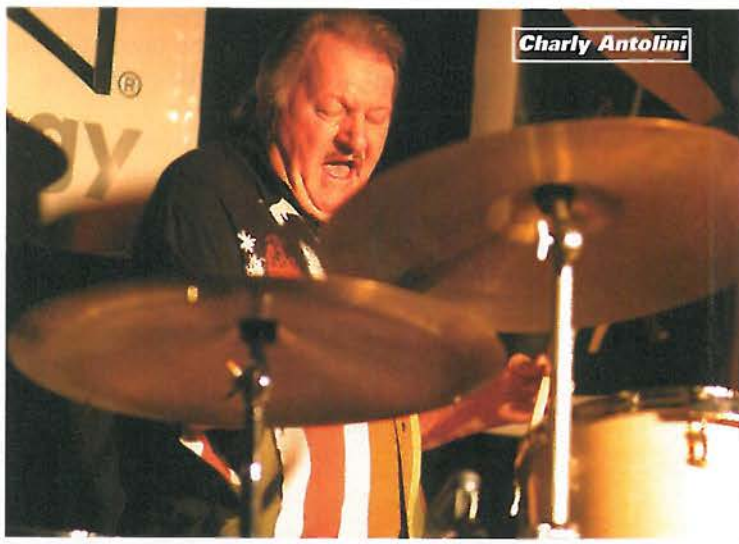
More than 700 European drumming fans attended the 5th AGP Drum Event this past September 17. The event was sponsored by the Al Ginter Percussion Shop in Luxembourg.

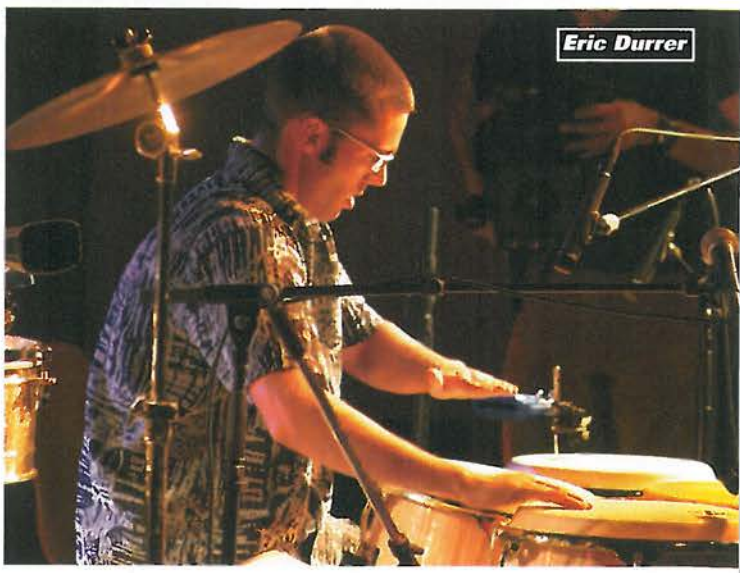
Gustavo Meli opened the show with a Latin fiesta, performing on a kit that featured five pedals on his left side alone. The young Argentine drum star impressed everyone with his astonishing technique. He was followed by **Boris Dinev**, a Bulgarian drummer who gave a rundown on the rhythms of his country. All the songs were in odd times, and finding "1" was often tricky.

A highlight of the evening was an appearance by European drum legend **Charly Antolini**, who is celebrating a half-century as a performer. His snare technique was an inspiration for all the drummers present. Charly was followed by up-and-comer **Eric Durrer**, from Luxembourg. Eric studies music in the Netherlands, and has already made enough of an impact as a performer to earn a Meinl endorsement.

Thomas Lang closed the show, and before he'd played four bars, everyone knew they were seeing something special. After playing along to two backbeat-oriented tracks, Thomas performed a thirty-minute solo that combined blazing stick technique with simply unbelievable footwork. The evening ended with a standing ovation for all the performers. For more information, check out www.alginter.lu.

Serge Kieffer





Indy Quickies

Kenny Aronoff with two admirers, and Michael Derosier

Kenny Aronoff joined original Heart drummer **Michael Derosier** for a two-day drum intensive at Donn Bennett Drum Studio in Bellevue, Washington this past August 28 and 29. Kenny discussed the way he prepares for a recording session, then demonstrated his studio techniques by recording two tracks in Bennett's on-site recording studio. The workshop was sponsored by Vic Firth and Remo. For pictures and more information go to www.bennettdrums.com.

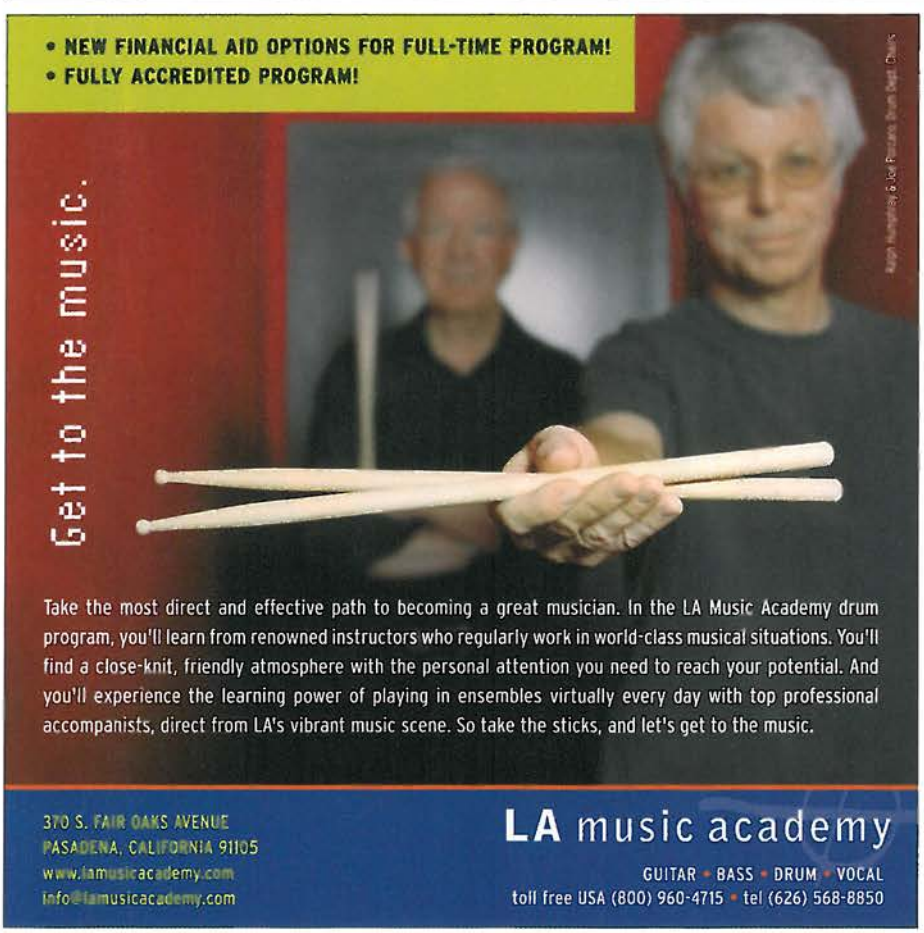
John Blackwell and his family have honored the memory of their late daughter, Jia, by establishing the **Jia Blackwell Memorial Scholarship Fund** at Berklee College of Music (John's alma mater). The program will benefit young women who are studying music. Berklee has established a secure online channel for VISA or MasterCard donations. For access, go to www.berklee.edu. From there, click on the Giving To Berklee link and follow further instructions.

According to the **Percussion Marketing Council**, a recent study conducted by E. Glenn Shallenberg at the University of Toronto showed that IQ test scores of six-year-old children significantly improved after those children received drum lessons. (But we already knew that, didn't we?) In his article in *Psychological Science*, Shallenberg concluded that musical training, in particular, was responsible for the extra IQ points.

The percussion team at **Kaman Music Corporation** (representing Gibraltar hardware) and the design and management team of **Latin Percussion** recently received plaques commemorating their wins in the 2004 *Modern Drummer* Consumers Poll. Below left: *MD* senior editor **Rick Van Horn** (center) presents plaques to (from left) Kaman director of percussion marketing **Ken Fredenberg**, percussion artist relations manager **Kim Graham**, percussion product specialist **Jim Stanek**, and Gretsch Drums product manager **Tim O'Neal**. Below right: *Modern Drummer* vice president **Kevin Kearns** (far right) is shown with (from left) LP director of marketing **Jim Rockwell**, senior vice president **David McAllister**, director of product development **Ray Enhoffer**, assistant product development manager **Richard Simons**, and designer/machinist **Andy Krol**.

In order to showcase **Yamaha**'s valued relationships with its endorsing artists, the company has launched a new section on its Web site devoted to those artists. That roster includes stellar drummers like Steve Gadd, Roy Haynes, Dave Weckl, Carter Beauford, and Matt Cameron.

The new section, found on www.yamaha.com, contains Artist News, a roster of Yamaha talent, and bios on many of the artists, as well as "Artist Spotlights" that give a more in-depth look at selected performers and their involvement with Yamaha products. Biographies and artist news will be continually updated.



Who's Using What

New Pro-Mark drumstick endorsers include **Keith Harris** (Black Eyed Peas), **Ringo Garza** (Los Lonely Boys), **Ronnie Vannucci** (The Killers), **Dan Trapp** (Senses Fail), and **Jordan Mancino** (As I Lay Dying).

Pearl has added three new artists to their concert percussion roster. **James Ancona** is assistant marching band director and co-director of the symphonic band at the University of Delaware. **Cynthia Yeh** is the new principal percussionist of the San Diego Symphony, and is currently on faculty at Valley Forge Military Academy & College. **Matthew Strauss** is on the faculty at the Mason Gross School Of Music at New Jersey's Rutgers University. He is also principal timpanist of the Delaware Symphony, and is a founding member of the Battery Four Percussion Group, an ensemble known for crossing musical genres and premiering new works.

New Meinl cymbal artists include **Mike Novack** (Every Time I Die), **Eron Bucciarelli** (Hawthorne Heights), **Kent Aberle** (independent), **Shawn Galea** (Colourblind), **Alex Dobono** (William Mangoin Band), and **Aaron Gillespie** (Underoath)

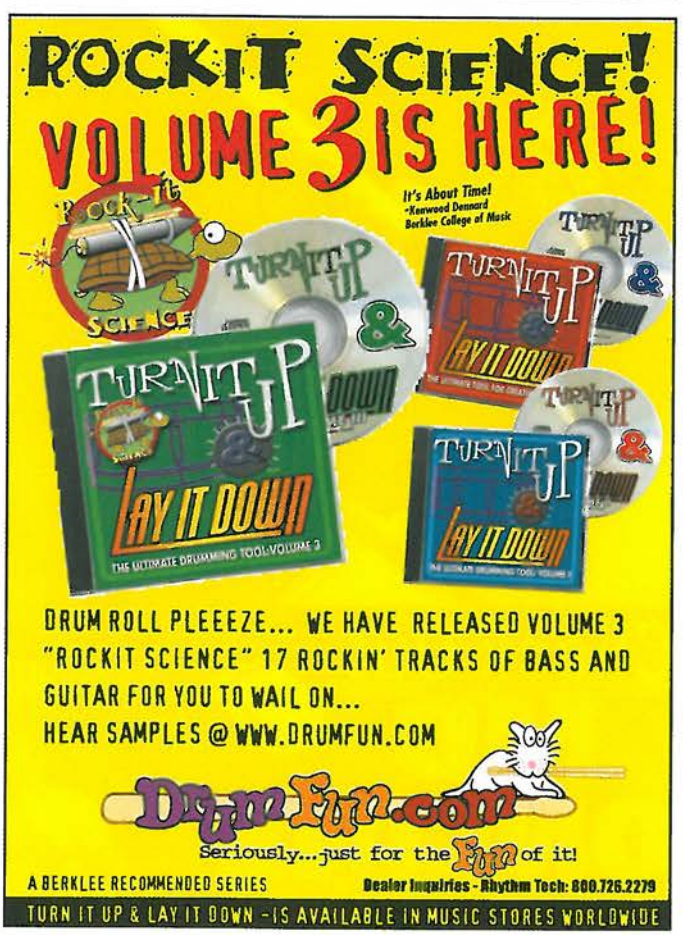
New Vic Firth drumstick endorsers include **John Boeklin** (Devildriver), **Dennis Poschwatta** (Guano Apes), **Mike Justain** (Unearth), **Ryan Parrish** (Darkest Hour), **Tony Laureano** (Dimmu Borgir), and **Kevin Frank** (Silvertide).

Pat Petrillo (Gloria Gaynor), **Franklin Vanderbilt** (Chaka Khan), **Herman Ernest** (Dr. John), **Ian Falgout** (Nikki B., The Mudflaps), and **J.J. Garcia** (Stone) are playing Taye drums.

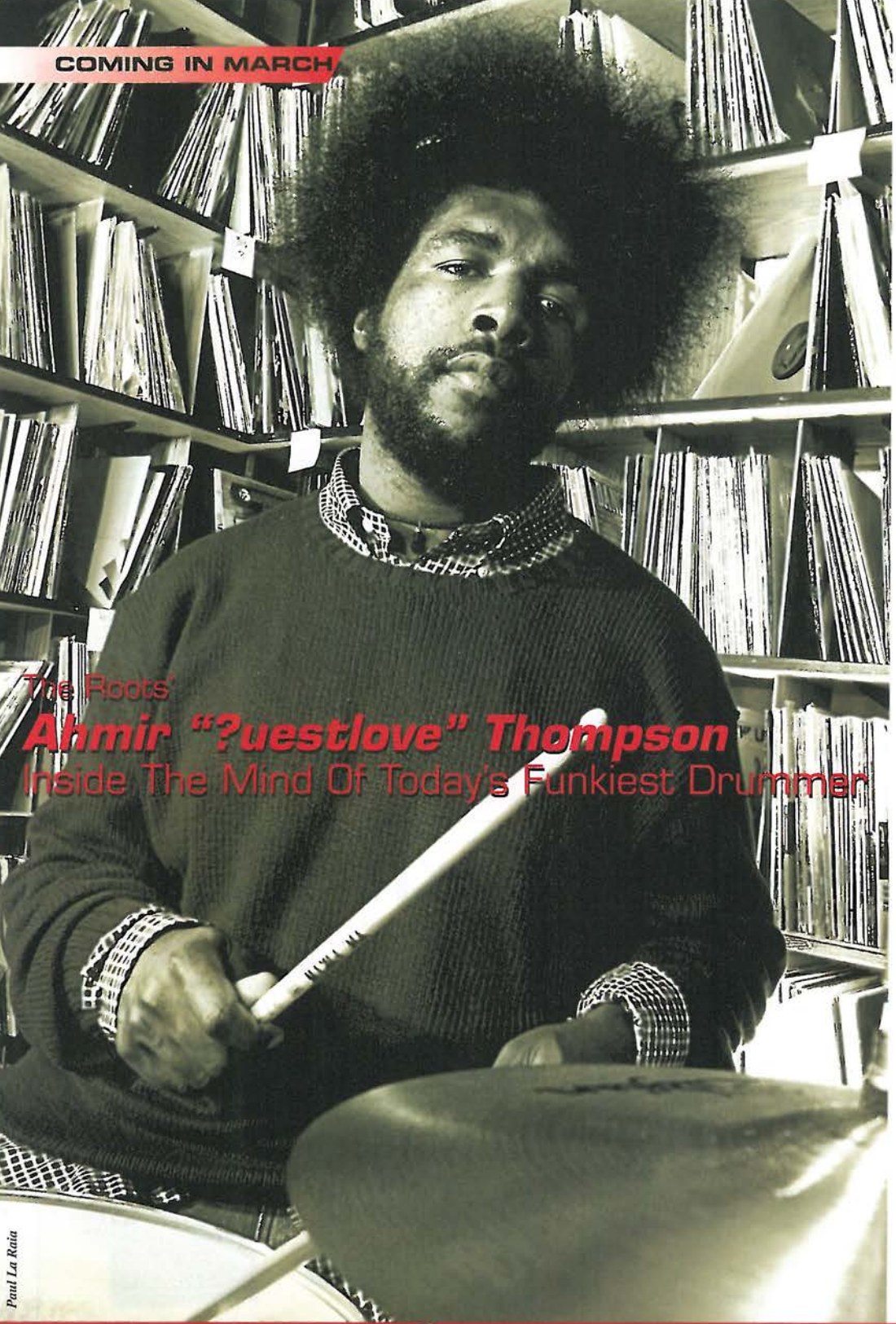
Matthew Stevens is using Latin Percussion gear on his gig with Canadian country music star Paul Brandt.

Mike Berkowitz is helping history to repeat itself as he drums for The New Gene Krupa Band on a Slingerland kit.

Kenny Washington (Joshua Redman, Kenny Barron, Mulgrew Miller), **Joe La Barbera** (Bill Evans, Phil Woods, Gary Burton, John Scofield), **Yvette Preyer** (Michael McDonald), **Artur Kremer** (stellastarr*), **Paris Escovedo** (The Escovedo Project), **Rocky Parnell** (The Dallas Moore Band), and **Phil Solomon** (UK author/educator) are new to the Regal Tip artist roster.



COMING IN MARCH



The Roots'
Ahmir "?uestlove" Thompson
Inside The Mind Of Today's Funkiest Drummer

Paul La Raia

Playback With The Great One:
Terry Bozzio

Rock 'N' Roll Studio Legend
Earl Palmer

A Simple Plan's
Chuck Comeau

Tim McGraw's
Billy "Thunder" Mason

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HONORING

STEVE GADD

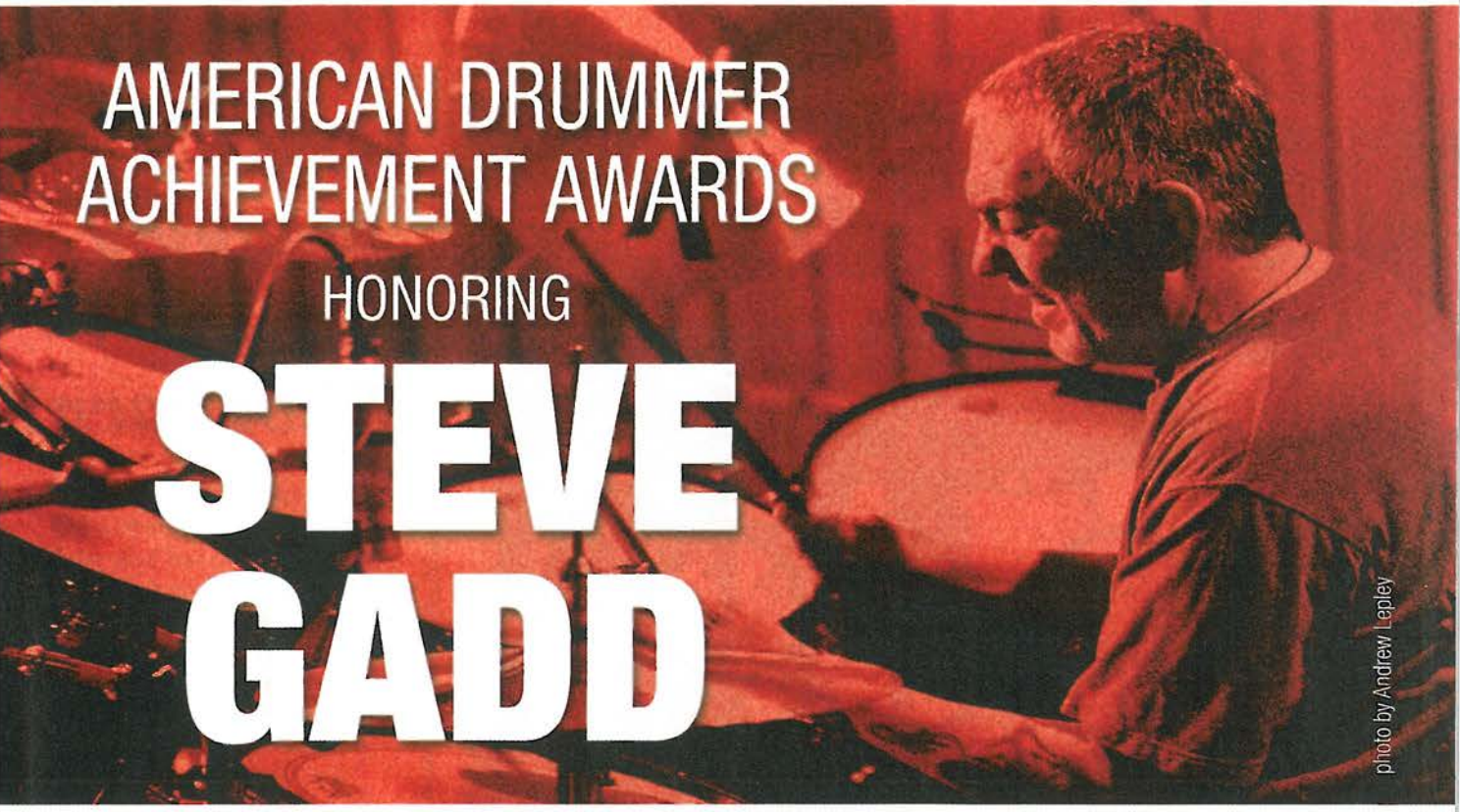
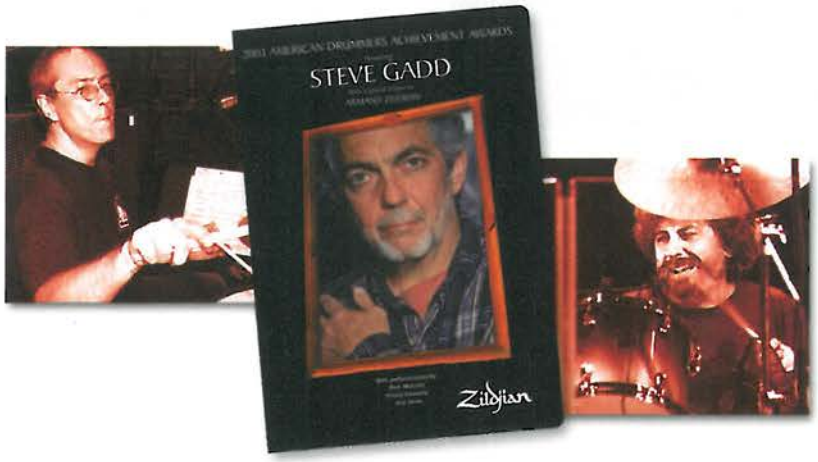


photo by Andrew Lepley

FEATURING

STEVE GADD
VINNIE COLAIUTA
RICK MAROTTA

PLUS A TRIBUTE TO ARMAND ZILDJIAN



In recognition of Steve Gadd's incredible impact on the art of drumming and music, on September 13, 2003, the Avedis Zildjian company presented Steve with an American Drummers Achievement Award (ADAA) at the Berklee Performance Center in Boston, MA— an historic evening that also included a special tribute to the late **Armand Zildjian.**

This once-in-a-lifetime event was hosted by **Mr. Bill Cosby** and featured an all-star band that included **Vinnie Colaiuta** and **Rick Marotta** on drums, **Michael Landau, Jimmy Johnson, Larry Goldings** and special guest appearances by **Will Lee** and **Tom Scott.** The evening culminated in an incredible performance by Steve with **James Taylor.**

The double-disc DVD features over six hours of footage, including the evening's great performances, exclusive rehearsal footage; a 20-minute documentary on Steve's career, backstage interviews, rare, early film footage of Steve and more.

Special DVD features include: Rehearsal Footage • Interviews with Eric Clapton, Chick Corea, Vinnie Colaiuta, Rick Marotta, Will Lee and Tom Scott • 5.1 Surround Sound mixes of all of the performances mixed from the drum chair • 35-minute interview with Steve • Rare video footage of Steve, circa 1970 with the U.S. Army Band, and footage from 1977 of the band, L'image, featuring Steve and Mike Mainieri • Photo Gallery

Total Running Time: Six Hours and Ten Minutes

Presented in association with Zildjian

Zildjian's net proceeds from the sale of this DVD will go to the Armand Zildjian Percussion Scholarship at the Berklee College of Music.

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To find a dealer near you, or for more information, please log on to www.hudsonmusic.com, email hudsoninfo@aol.com or call 1-888-796-2992. In Europe email hudsoneuro@aol.com.
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Anybody Got A Shoehorn?

Chicago drummer Vladimir Titiyevsky's drumkit is a shining example of just how much drum and percussion gear can fit into a single, relatively compact setup. That is, when the drummer uses a combination of available technology and some imagination.

Vlad's kit begins with a classic set of 1985 North fiberglass drums. To this he has added a Tama rack and Yamaha and Tama stands and boom arms. Together, they hold a 6x13 Yamaha woodhoop snare drum, a 5x10 Gretsch snare, Remo RotoToms, 13" and 14" LP Aspire timbales, 13" Paiste Dark Crisp hi-hats, 14" Sabian B8 hi-hats, a 20" Headliner ride, a selection of Paiste crashes, various Sabian, Zildjian, and Paiste splashes, an Icebell, three Pearl cowbells, LP Blast and Jam blocks, a hi-hat tambourine, a Roland SPD-6 trigger pad and Roland drum triggers wired into an Alesis DM-5 drum module, and Shure and Octava mic's on the drums. A Sound Percussion hi-hat stand, a Yamaha double pedal, and a Mirage single pedal complete the assembly.

There's even a little space for Vlad.

PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds. 5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit. Send photo(s) to: Drumkit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.

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